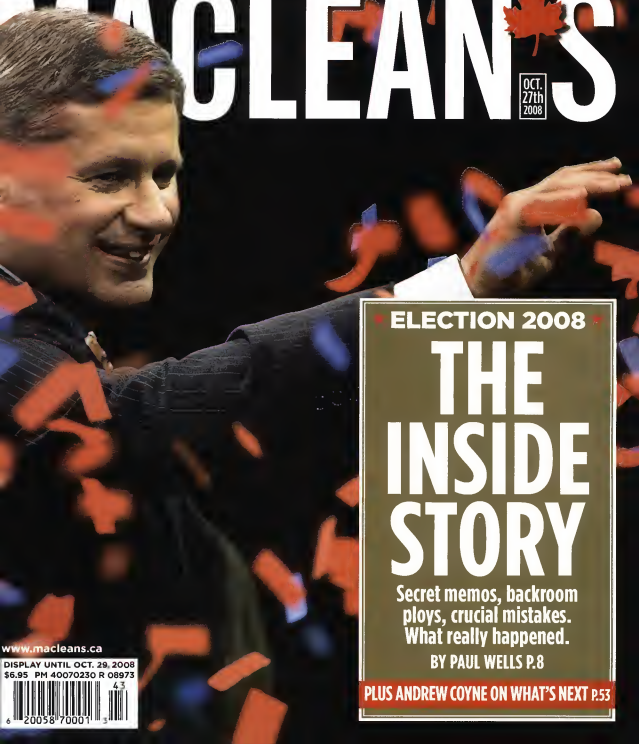


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# MACLEAN'S

OCT.  
27th  
2008



• ELECTION 2008 •

## THE INSIDE STORY

Secret memos, backroom  
ploys, crucial mistakes.  
What really happened.

BY PAUL WELLS P.8

PLUS ANDREW COYNE ON WHAT'S NEXT P.53

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Gilbert Siroisberry, 1973-2008



ANOTHER HARDSHIP? voters another Parliament, distracted by short-term political jockeying

## The election & other unfinished business

**N**over 100 foreign economic crises unfolded so directly upon a Canadian election at this year. Even in 1995, when the popular Liberal machine of William Lyon Mackenzie King was crushed in reaction to the Great Depression, the stock market crash of 1929 was only a year past. And yet, while the events that compared to that week's federal election may be unique in their scale, the result is familiar—another flowering minority government.

Two weeks ago at this space we argued that the country required a majority government. The reasons were twofold. First, Prime Minister Stephen Harper had made a sufficient case for himself based on his accomplishments in office. With a cautious majority, he created what might be called a cautiously conservative administration, slowing the rate of growth in government and beginning a clear trend toward conservatism and efficiency. Taxes were lowered and there was renewed activity in establishing positive trade relationships with other countries. All this suggested greater things were possible with a majority.

Second, and more importantly, with a global financial crisis in the offing, it is desirable to have a government in Ottawa with the ability to act decisively to stave off economic trouble at home. A majority mandate frees government from endlessly fretting over re-election prospects and allows long-term thinking and strong leadership in addressing financial distress and economic uncertainty.

A majority government, however, is not the expressed will of the Canadian people. The middle/legality crunch around the world, and Harper's almost reaction to it, has produced a repeat Conservative victory, albeit with an increase in seats. While we're not prepared to argue with the hallock, we do lament the prospect of a year and perhaps several years of a Parliament distracted by short-term political jockeying.

To find out how this all happened—and what the next Parliament will mean for Canada—Maclean's presents our special election edition. It is the culmination of months of work by some of Canada's best and most experienced political journalists. The centerpiece of our coverage is Senior Columnist Paul Wells's 16-page account of the campaign

from the deep of the writ to the concession speeches, with behind-the-scenes reports from such major party "insiders" that assure careful or insightful coverage of election '08 anywhere. The crowning piece of our package is National Editor Andrew Coyne's analysis of the state of our national polity in the wake of this short, chaotic campaign.

It is our sincere hope that this issue demonstrates the relevance of comprehensive magazine journalism in an age of sound bites and headline news, and that we have delivered to our readers the information and perspective they require to make sense of a crucial event in the life of our country.

## A small victory for free speech

**LAST WEEK**, this magazine's 18-month legal confrontation with the Canadian Islamic Congress over our October 2006 cover story, "The Future Belongs to Islam," finally came to an end. The federal Canadian Human Rights Commission backed down its ruling, and completely reversed Maclean's of charges that our article, an excerpt from Mark Sayf's international bestseller *America Alone*, amounted to hate speech under B.C.'s human rights code. The whole discussion ran 77 pages, but the heart of the ruling is contained in a single passage: "In addition to content, the article is essentially an expression of opinion on political issues which, in light of recent historical events involving extremist Muslims and the problems facing the vast majority of the Muslim community that does not support extremist, are legitimate subjects for public discussion."

That is exactly what we have been saying for two years, and it is gratifying to see the commission uphold our view and explicitly support the right of the news media to publish a range of views and perspectives, including those that may offend some members of the public. As we have said repeatedly, the article in question was a well-reasoned and well-researched argument on a serious matter of public interest, from one of the most respected writers in North America. The article sparked a robust debate, and Maclean's published an extraordinary number of letters to the editor, which reflected a vast range of opinions expressed by the article.

Nevertheless, the CBC and its president Mohamed Elmaghrabi launched complaints with human rights commissions in Ontario and B.C. as well as with the federal HRC. Ontario ruled that it had no jurisdiction over the news media, while the federal commission declined to hear the case. The BCHRC

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# WHAT HAPPENED

Secret memos, backroom strategies and crucial mistakes.  
The inside story of Stephen Harper lunge for a majority. **By Paul Wells**

# A campaign of chaos and surprise



PAUL WELLS

Winning a second time is never quite as good as winning the first. Stephen Harper didn't look unhappy at any major election night as he did on that other night, not three years ago but already another. Even now, nothing comes without effort to Harper. But it had come and he would take it.

"Tonight, Canadians have voted to move our country forward and they have done so with confidence in the future," Stephen Harper told thousands of supporters at the Rick Warren Convention Centre in Calgary. And already it was hard for a historian to hang onto any feeling of magic.

Confidence in the future? Was that what this was all about? Because Harper had spent millions of dollars, starting long before this campaign began, buying Canadians toward a conservative lack of confidence in his opponents or their policies. He had closed the deal, in this campaign's final weekend, with ads whose script included the words "removed," "warmed," "costly" and "risk." He had warned Canadians against recession, leaders' shonkies, higher prices and a monetary crisis. So now apparently a vote against a land of dragons was a vote of confidence in the future.

It had been that kind of campaign, a campaign of sleight of hand, of redirection, of focus and defocus. It had begun with food election time that food nothing, a series of negotiations at St. Louis in which nothing was agreed, a request to a Governor General who couldn't say no. It had led to a campaign in which words would often seem to matter

more than the plain meaning of words, when both sides would prove treacherous, when some words seemed to come from a nebula and others from Australia. Just about every one would accuse somebody else of lacking a plan. Just about everyone, discovering his plan was lacking, would be forced to improvise before it was all over.

Now Stephen Harper had come out on top. It was an accomplishment not to be dismissed. Liberals who expected a tidy 18 months in the penalty box when he was first elected realized they had another dark coasting and

would choose the string of the election. Harper had already worked hard to take away Dion's credibility, his dignity and his ability to pay the party bills. Now he took away Dion's control over timing. And on this Tuesday night less than two months after Harper had even begun hinting that an election might be his doing and no one else's, the Liberals were weakened, rocked, perhaps at broken but probably close to broke.

"I love my country more than ever," Dion told a crowd in Montreal. "Canada has asked me to be the Opposition leader and I accept this responsibility with honour." Plus ça change? No. Plus ça change was still terribly sad, as he spoke. He was not looking anyone, not even himself, in the eye. The darkness about his future lay before him, not behind.

This election had produced many gains and left very few of its protagonists feeling like winners. Under Elizabeth May the Green party vote grew larger than it ever had before. Not high enough to win a seat, including here. And her constant musing about whether Green supporters should even vote Green had left a lot of anger among her party members. She was tired of having to explain herself to supporters, but now the rock sitting would come from much closer to home.

The other parties had spent the summer circling over the Bloc Québécois like vultures. Harper and Dion and even the NDP's Jack Layton had planned to unite against the Quebec expense. In the end the Bloc had largely held its own. But there was no triumph in Duceppe's voice as he sought ways to express his sovereignty fervor without saying the words that would make a plan. "Quebecers did not vote for sovereignty tonight, but they did vote for a sovereign party," he said. "I would certainly have been more secure if I'd been around; they had voted for a sovereign party but not for sovereignty. This renewed support from Quebecers was more renewed than support. Like Harper, Duceppe could not actually claim to have benefited from anyone's confidence in the future. Unlike Harper he didn't even try.

Somewhere between Harper's long-lost Nelson and his speech at the Rick Warren, the country's mood had turned, not so much

ELECTION NIGHT: Dion supporters in Montreal, Harper celebrates in Calgary



**Harper emerged weary but strengthened. Once could be lucky. Twice looks more like skill.**

plenty of time to think it. Quebec countrymen who had spent weeks upholding his failure in Quebec were startled to learn his share of the vote there had gone up, though not his share of the seats. At the end of August his main opponent, Stéphane Dion, had returned from a living trip boggling at the





LARSON with Olivia Chow in Toronto. The NDP leader has given the party's seat count in three successive elections.

because of the election campaign but despite no leaders' best efforts to keep Canadians to right events and adventure. Harper took a sometime time he had not struck on the night of his first election. "These are challenging times in the world economy," he said. "Canadians are worried right now and I understand those worries. But I want to assure Canadians that working together we will weather this storm."

He announced three priorities: "First we will continue to govern on behalf of all Canadians." His party had impressive representation from across the country. "At the same time it accepts a role as it should be." So he promised "an active and responsive government."

Second, he vowed to "continue to respect the principle that government is accountable to the people's representatives in Parliament." To that end he asked the opposition parties to work with him on the toughest problems facing the country.

And third, he promised to "inspire patriotism. We will do what we can and we will do it." Whether this was inspiring, would depend how you felt about Harper's promise to "continue" doing as before. "We have already

## It had been a campaign of sleight of hand, of redefinition, of feints and dekes

governing for all Canadians? Was he already accountable to the people's representatives? Then you could look forward to more of the same. And if you thought he had done neither—well, then, yes, too, could look forward to more of the same.

It was a dispiriting election, a passage of depressing times. But at least it clarified a few things. Harper emerged stronger. Any talk that he had failed by winning a majority of seats (roughly 140 seats), and Conservatives, and the fractured and fractious assortment of parties who oppose him. This was victory more bitter than sweet but it was victory. It was a mandate, not a maddening but

strong enough, is evident.

What follows is the chronicle of how it all happened. A recap of Maclean's reports followed this campaign in every form, spent time on the road with every leader, sought out new perspectives and inside information. Our goal was to tell not only what happened, but why. And, always, to seek some clues about what will come next.

If the 2006 election was about two men, Stephen Harper and Paul Martin, this time the story was, in some ways, more complex, but in other ways more basic. This contest not only the story of Harper and Dean. The other parties played too great a role for that, and we have tried to give them proper attention here.

But to a much greater extent than in 2006, this is Stephen Harper's story. He chose the election, chose an central battlefield—the economy—set the terms by which both he and his principal adversary would be defined. At times it all seemed set to backfire. For the last two weeks of the campaign he just looked, dog tired all the time.

His strategy may not have strengthened. Quite the opposite. Twice he looks more like skill than chance. Stephen Harper did it.



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ONE, THEY'RE OFF

# Cuddly vs. apocalyptic

**WHEN HE FINALLY** climbed into a limo one for the three-minute ride from 14 Sussex Drive to Rideau Hall, Stephen Harper was 49 years old and had been hovering around the Laurent Hill for more than 10 years in one job or another. He had won fewer than half of the seats in the House of Commons in 2006, but had managed to build that minority government together longer than any other minority in Canadian history. This Conservative leader has long been a private man, but he is no hermit, and there are not many people in today's Ottawa more familiar to the donors of the product and the Hill.

And yet Harper still manages to surprise. What nobody could figure out on this particular morning was why he was so dazed, cuddly.

Inside Rideau Hall, Harper spent a half hour asking Governor General Michaëlle Jean to dissolve Parliament and get this election campaign started. In 2006 he had introduced a law on fixed election dates. The law said an election would be held in October 2009, unless the government was defeated in the House of Commons. Many Canadians, including Harper's own associates, took that law to mean that he wouldn't do what he was doing now—call his own election before the Liberals, New Democrats and Bloc Québécois had forced one on him. Still, Michaëlle Jean's answer was never in doubt. Harper would have his election.

Harper left Rideau Hall and, surrounded by a swarm of photographers and camera crews, strode the short distance to a makeshift podium in the Canadian Heritage Garden.

"Bon matin, good morning," Harper said. He made a little show of pausing to greet the journalists arrayed in three rows before him. "I guess I never realized until now how many of you guys really are." He smiled a baby's half-smile. Golly.

Then he reached his first statement: "Between now and Oct. 14, Canadians will choose a government to look out for their interests at a time of global economic trouble. They will choose between a clear direction or uncertainty, between cautious new or risky open results, between conservatism or radicalism."

The campaign would be just 36 days of choice and surprise, starting after close to sunrise. Yet Harper was trying now, at the

moment, to frame the decision Canadians would make five weeks hence. The message was simple because it had to be: in risky times, don't give up on core values. The argument played to Harper's strength, the economic feed it yielded. Stephen Harper is the devil Canadian didn't know: risky, daring, new. Like the American free!

Not that this was any regularity. "Canadians know that I'm not one for big talk or grand slogans. I believe in what we are, and how much we care, by what we do."

What he had done was get government out of your wallet. "Today, Tax Freedom Day—the day you stop working for the government and start working for yourself—arrives in days rather than in 100 years."



**ON THE MOVE:** Harper tried to paint Gies as the devil Canadians didn't know: risky, daring, new. Jack Layton began with an apocalyptic vision that he should be PM

Who could be against that? Here's who: "An Opposition whose message is to make it certain attempts to make unclear and risky again."

With that, Harper was more or less done. From the content alone, but he wasn't done. Turning himself. He wanted to dive on a personal note, he said, as though this was a common urge to, indeed, one that had



ever struck him before in his life. "Over the past 25 years I've had a tremendous opportunity," he said. "An opportunity for which I'd be forever grateful. The opportunity to serve as the Prime Minister of the best country in the world." With that he closed the clipboard that held the text of his speech, took a sip of water, and surveyed the reporters arrayed, apparently in targeting ques-



tion, before him. Alexander Manning from the Canada Press was there: asked the first question. If Harper fell short of a majority of votes in the next Parliament, would he consider himself to have failed in three attempts to reach that goal? Would he give up the Conservative leadership title? "That's a really personal question. Obviously I'm in this to win."

Another question: What was the deal with the ads the Conservatives had been running for the last week? Each one and with a shot of a Maple Leaf flag flapping proudly in the breeze, then out to Harper is a cordy dets be as women rest, that up with women to his Harington Lake residence. In one ad he talked about his children. ("You know, the time is precious. But being a father is the best experience of my life.") In another he mentioned the importance of fighting terrorism. He talked about his children. ("You know, the time is precious. But being a father is the best experience of my life.") In another he mentioned the importance of fighting terrorism. He talked about his children. ("You know, the time is precious. But being a father is the best experience of my life.")

A third offered his gratitude to women. ("Never forget how precious it is. How precious when we have a.")

Harper explained sheepishly that he'd been backed into this odd messaging by his staff. "They find that not even don't yet know me the way they"—his staffers—"know me, the way my caucus knows me. And we should probably go out of our way to highlight the common points of the job."

"You know, people say it must be tough to balance your family life with being Prime Minister. In fact, it

sharing with the kids in the crowd about what his father was like. What was next? Yoga?

With a little teasing from reporters, Harper finally acknowledged that Don had a family too. Probably. "You know, I don't know Steve's phone. Don of that well but I presume he's been married a long time. As children, I presume he's a family man also."

With that exquisitely understated endorsement of his opponent's biological value at an alpha male, Harper pointed on his hand and prepared to stroll away from the podium. "I won't say 'bye,'" he said to the assembled strikers. "I'll see you for five weeks."

It would so so truly be true, like a suburban family breakfast in a David Lynch movie. "Won't say 'bye'." It's not as though he'd been one for fighting terrorism. He talked about his children. ("You know, the time is precious. But being a father is the best experience of my life.")

Wield later, a top Conservative strategist would explain that theory was in essence—a winner was who, the leader in touch with his dad side—served a vital strategic purpose.

Stephen Harper's politics has always been about saving Canada, not a string of promises or as when elected in a race, but as a somewhat ideological group. Harper's Conservative party is a determinedly middle-class party, one that seeks to appeal to working families with children. His main election strategy, Patrick Martin, a strategist about demographic analysis. In the last days of the 2006 campaign, Martin was joined in the Conservative war room by another newcomer to Harper's inner circle, Guy Gies, a former chief of staff to Ontario premier Mike Harris. Together the women helped Harper, but they saw how limited his appeal was among women voters.

## Here was Harper, crusher of weaklings, sharing his emotions. What was next, yoga?

But this time would be different. Martin was still on board as Harper's chief strategist. Gies, who had become Harper's chief of staff on Canada Day, was Martin's equal in designing campaign strategy. Perhaps surprisingly, the two men use a period of election: tactical in a good time to reach out to women voters. "The women vote has been economic concerns. Women tend to be driven less by identity. They're driven by security type issues," the strategist said.



Emirates

"The worst thing has been the driving motivation for the look of our events, the messaging in our events, the debate strategy—all revolved around keeping, maintaining that lead among women voters. The old Reform party question was, 'How do we grow into the Ontario vote?' The question Patrick and Gay must have asked at some point is, 'How do we grow into the women vote?' It's back to demographics, not religion, right? So that's a big part of the story of what's different about this campaign: going after the women's vote and looking at everything through that lens."

As Harper walked away from the podium on the Rideau Hall grounds, Stéphane Dion bowed down a moment to the House of Commons foyer with his wife, Jeanne Kruger. Like Harper, Dion would spend the campaign playing against type. If Harper needed to shake his image as a heartless hard case, Dion had to prove he could be an effective leader. The Conservatives had spent nearly two years and millions of dollars on an ad campaign designed to convince Canadians he wasn't. The suspicion Dion they might be right had spread to a sizable chunk of the electorate, to much of the punditry, many press galleries, and to not a few Liberals themselves. The fiery, amphetamine-fueled academic would have only five weeks to prove everyone wrong.

The tone he chose to be set about his task was nearly apocalyptic: "The next 37 days will be some of the most crucial in our history," he said. "There has never been a federal election that has more clearly provided Can-

**GREEN LEADER** Elizabeth May would prove a wildcard, even for her own party. Gillies Duceppe faced a defensive battle.



adians with such a stark choice between two visions for our country." How stark? "Keep in mind Harper formed the most conservative government in history." Not just Canadian history, apparently. "Because they don't understand the role of the government, they are unable to provide sound policies for Canadians." Dion fired a few Harper policies he didn't see as sound, and offered a few Liberal policies he hoped would sound more appealing.

But like Harper, much of Dion's buzzword here was about himself. Here at last was a chance to tell his tale, after the Harper

**'Women are driven less by identity, more by economic concerns.' For the Tories, they were the big prize.**

Conservatives had spent two years looking but lost: "I am excited about this election that will give me the opportunity to have a direct dialogue with you," Dion said. "And for the first time, you will be able to learn more about who I am and what I stand for" in a way it was a startling admission: Dion had been a member of Parliament for 12 years, a key player in the governments of Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin. He had been all across for the Liberal leadership, stood most days in the Commons to lead the attack on Harper. And here he was admitting to being a bit of a middle, even now.

Nowhere was this more palpable than in his native Quebec. Dion was a university professor's son from Bécancour, a leafy suburb of Quebec City, but the ethos in his province had enraptured him ever since his days as Chrétien's heart-throb in the election moment unity debate. The Liberals' electoral prospects were shaky across the map, but perhaps nowhere more so, outside Alberta, than in this copious Quebec. Dion took a few minutes to comfort everyone he was a franco-phone Quebecer.

"My friends, I am as proud of Quebecers as Gilles Duceppe," Dion said in French. "The role that we can play—that we should play—in this Canada that we have built is more important than ever before... nothing is too big, nothing is too ambitious for the hearts of Quebecers." He

closed, in a softer tone, with an appeal to the broader Canadian population. "My fellow Canadians, as Liberals we speak to your great minds and your big hearts about our vision," he said. "What lay ahead 'may well be the most crucial election campaign in our history.'"

With that, Dion walked out of the Centre Bloc co-willing campaign bus. He wouldn't have an airplane for these next days. His staff wouldn't book one in time. The mismatch between the Liberal's rhetoric and his actions was jarring. Dion hoped to make history, but Canadians didn't know him. Quebecers didn't even hear, and airfares wouldn't run to him. Harper had chosen the moment of their confrontation, moved quickly to set terms that favored him, and was aggressively seeking to broaden his own voter coalition while diminishing Dion's.

This didn't look like it would be a great debate or even a heavy script. It looked like a rousing

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TWO: THE OUBOU WAR

# The fight for regular folks

**AND THEY WERE OFF.** Stephen Harper's campaign plane flew straight to Quebec. Now, in 2006, Quebec was a big part of the Conservative strategy to win new seats, and the region around the provincial capital—unprecedented, unlike class, a success of the real and its social class—has always been the backbone of Quebec conservatism.

In a small hall, off the lobby of the Hilton hotel, 300 people waited for Harper. Some were "hardcore" supporters who had been prepared by Conservative campaign staff. Harper's supporters handed out own releases: "Quebec Must Choose Between Harper and Dion," the top line read.

That single reflected Conservative fears of Liberal hopes. Dion might be a son of Quebec, but so far it had done him little good. But if he managed to get attention and traction in his home province, the Liberals would turn back over. Harper needed to keep Dion on the mat.

The Blue Quebecers still led the polls in Quebec, but its support had been soft ever since the 1996 provincial election, the Parti

Québécois, came in third in the 2007 provincial election. By late spring, Quebecers' choice as one between Liberals and Conservatives, Harper wanted to send the message that the Bloc was simply irrelevant.

"It's not that not everyone in Quebec agrees with my speech," Harper told the crowd. "But you know, not everyone in Alberta agrees with everything I do or don't do." And yet, he said in another confessional moment, he tried to earn Quebecers' support by "speaking your language." His French may not be perfect, "but I hope that every day it's getting better... Because a prime minister must be able to transcend your pride to the world."

The Conservatives already had French language ads running in Quebec, also winning and all in the family to be sure. Around a breakfast table, Harper and his Quebec cabinet members shared a pancake breakfast. Jean Verreault was the only woman; the men were dressed identically, in open-collar blue dress shirts. Everyone smiled. Their script suggested they were amazed at all they had accomplished, but that each of them was quite

sure the others still needed reinforcing. "If we remember well, the last time in Quebec, we promised it would change for real," said Lawrence Cannon, nodding. "Yes. We re-established accountability," Harper told Cannon. "And we worked the fiscal situation," he said to the rest of the table, nodding.

The camera captured somebody's hands pouring a glass of orange juice. Jean-François Blackburn chimed in. "On top of that, we recognized the Quebecers' nation. And Quebec now has a seat at UNESCO."

Verreault smiled and nodded. But she had more. "We give it to a new life in families having young children; we are lowering the GST. You won't just get to five per cent!" Christian Paradis could contain himself no longer. "And we took care of the economic development of our region!"

Michael Fournier. "And we have a plan to reduce greenhouse gases, a plan that requires no new taxes."

"We've been responsible," Harper concluded. "And we took the right decisions." Nodding.

Cannon. "Things the Liberals promised, but finally refused to do."

Paradis. "Real action the Bloc will never have the power to carry out."

Verreault. "And for once we have a government that keeps its promises!" Fournier changed the subject. "We're showing real leadership." Why stop? "We have a team that works hard and we're

WITH ADVICE: Marc-André Billette as a male, in his fight between independent academics and Harper strategists, the academics' last



PHOTOGRAPH BY VAN NUBERT



EARLY ON, a pundit called Dean's campaign a "funeral procession," NDP attack ads wound up helping Baccoppe

going in the right direction," Harper concluded. The screen flashed the party's Quebec-only campaign slogan: "Le Québec, pour des français." Quebec is gathering strength. The message in the ad—a Conservative icon that was ambitious, tall-talented, fond of paradox, addicted to nodding and apparently paired with a short-term memory problem that forced ads to remind the others what they had been up to for two years—could not have been more artificial if it had depicted the Conservatives dressed in asaphoric costumes and dancing on Flats. Yet the mood they captured was real. These were the early hours of the Harper '08 campaign. Everything seemed possible.

Beginning in downtown Quebec City but soon across the country, Harper was visiting only villages the Conservatives didn't hold. You might not think it would matter whether a leader visits a given village, but in fact it affects local voters' attitudes a lot. Says

Harper's campaign stops amounted to a hit list. The Quebec City riding known simply as Quebec—several Sinc NP Christine Gagnon, Richard, in S.C. Liberal Raymond Chan, Winston, in Saint-John's—Liberal Ralph Goodale. Two locations stops in one day: two former Liberal leadership candidates, Maurizio Lelli and Joe Wolfe.

At first the most resounding rebuttal to the Conservatives' Quebec optimism came, not from the Bloc or

the Liberals, but from Jack Layton's NDP. The party had been good to get an MP elected in the Democratic by-election at the end of 2007, the only former Quebec minister minister Thomas Mulcair, who was born in Montreal, hoped to capitalize on the Mulcair breakthrough. Step east, the New Democrats decided, was to drive up the number of undecided voters by carpet bombing the Conservatives. The result was the most sickeningly broadcast ad in the history of Canadian political campaigning.

Shot in black and white, the ads featured an inebriated or washed-out or high-strung and disorienting music in the background as a succession of animated and archival images ran together. "A vote

for the Conservatives..." a woman's voice, barely a whisper, intones. The screen blacks. Words rush toward the screen: "RETROGRADE IDEOLOGY. AUTHORITARIAN INTOLERANCE." The narrator finishes her thought "...is voting for narrow thinking." An animated father and child rush toward the camera in silhouette—as the animated child disappears from the head down. Perhaps it was because of radiation from the nuclear power plant now ruckus at the corner. "For out to culture," the woman says at a gasp smashes. "It's voting against Quebec," she says. All the while, doubly reversed footage of Harper's face plays on the left side of the screen, as the screen.

Suddenly, sunlight. George W. Bush plays on the right. "It's a pro-war vote that makes us the slaves of the oilman." Animated black and white faces fill the screen. Two arms rise up, clasp in chains.

Suddenly, sunlight. George W. Bush plays on the right. "It's a pro-war vote that makes us the slaves of the oilman." Animated black and white faces fill the screen. Two arms rise up, clasp in chains. The ads caught the Conservatives' attention. At the end of the 2006 campaign Paul Martin's Liberals had played with ads warning that a vote for Harper was a vote for armies in the streets. The Liberals had backed away from such a dark message, though not before a copy of the ad looked. But the Liberal spot was an episode of the *Twilight* compared to what the NDP was now using to bombard Quebec voters.

Conservative pollsters followed the effect of the NDP ads over the next several days. What they found was that the ads had accomplished only half their purpose. They drove voters away from the Conservatives. But not toward the New Democrats.

Perhaps Jack Layton's persona distance was not reassuring enough to compensate for the suggestion that voting the wrong way could make your child's head disappear. For whatever reason, Conservatives are sweetening the NDP's terror ads down Quebec voters to the safe and familiar. Everywhere the NDP ads played,

**Armies in the street. Nuclear fallout. NDP ads struck a note of terror.**

BOB WICKSTEADT/ANSA CHANNEL/GETTY IMAGES

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support for the 1867 Quebec vote up.

On the ground, Harper's campaign was progressing like clockwork. It ought to be controlled down to the last detail. From Quebec City the Conservative leader rose to Vancouver for a night's rest in an airport hotel and an early-morning breakfast-table chat with the Hogg family in suburban Richmond. The Harveys—Edwin, 51, their toddlers Kevin and Eric—didn't say much, but they must have been flattered. The Prime Minister of Canada had flown across the Rockies for a photo-opportunity with them, and he would fly back over the Rockies without speaking to reporters else.

For it was not to Saskatchewan and the gleaming, brand-new town of Regina and



Dion with wife, online Krishna and daughter, Jeanne, Harper in Quebec



Sept. 17, or indeed for several days afterward. So the Liberals planned a ground game for the campaign's first five days. If Harper hadn't abandoned his feed election date law, there would have been by-elections on Sept. 8. So Dion visited two of those ridings to remind everyone of the wasted energy in those abandoned local campaigns. He went to a high school in Whitby, Ont., site of an outbreak of contaminated drinking water in 2000, to

In Whistler, he visited a timid warehouse where workers were stored waiting for trucks to take them to market. Dion cracked. Harper announced he would curbside sales on credit card. The car would "benefit consumers who buy virtually anything that moves by truck, train, ship or plane," he said.

What it would also do, of course, was sharpen the contrast with Dion's "Green Shift," which sought to pay for income-tax cuts by imposing a carbon tax. Harper's ideal car cut bore all the fingerprints of his chief strategist, Patrick Murray. It played up differences between the Conservatives and the Liberals. It put Harper squarely on the title of regular folk such as truckers. As a son of bones, it also drove economists mad with frustration. "This is unfathomably stupid," economist Stephen Gordon wrote on his blog. "It was stroke, it stroke me out and getting problems—the deteriorating fiscal situation and gross and gross gas tax increases—and then them both were."

But supporters didn't like Harper's 2006 promise to cut the GST either. As a rule, in any fight between independent academics

and Harper's strategy team, the academics were likely to have a hard time of it.

It was turning into a rough week for an dummies of all sorts. Dion's campaign bus was making its way around Quebec and Ontario to the sound of gaveling from reporters. In

terview the Conservatives on food safety. There was a lot of reason to his nerves, at no time. He was cheerful, disarming, a little sparkling at campaign stops. He gave the Whitby school kids an impromptu lecture on global warming. "There are in the atmosphere certain gases..."

The reviews were not charitable. In the *National Post*, Don Martin called the campaign "a funeral procession." Later, a senior Conservative who has worked on all of Harper's national campaigns said his advice was ignored by the focus of focus in the Dion campaign.

"They were going to ridings that were the safest Liberal ridings you can imagine. No campaign plan, no message. At the end of every speech you give in a campaign, you state the ballot question. I don't go to find a ballot question in anything Dion said in the first week. And I was worried, saying, but he didn't make any sense."

It wasn't emphasizing that this was always going to be difficult, this thing Stéphane Dion



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was trying to do. Never mind that he's Stephen Dion and he's all elbows even the most dubbing, over-sunged, cringing new opposition leader would have his work cut out, trying to defeat a newly elected Prime Minister. In fact, not once since Confederation had a newly selected opposition leader defeated a newly elected prime minister.

Canadians used to give their heads of government first and considerable benefit of the doubt. Since Confederation only three elected prime ministers have been defeated after a single victory at the ballot box. Alexander MacKenzie, R.B. Bennett and Joe Clark. Each was defeated, not by a weaker opponent, but by the wily pol he had beaten in the previous election. Sir John A. Macdonald beat MacKenzie, William Lyon Mackenzie King beat Bennett, and Pierre Trudeau came out of retirement to beat Joe Clark. Re-election is far more common in Canada than early defeat.

This issue was lost on Liberals. Many assumed their 2006 loss would put them in a penalty box for as long as 18 months before they bounced back. A party that regarded Stephen Harper's election as a failure was ill-equipped to contemplate the reasons for his victory. He would collapse under the weight of his own implausibility soon enough, they thought.

Not did Dion bring a strong head to the game. He won only 18 per cent of the vote on the first ballot at the Liberal leadership convention at the end of 2006. Voting went to four ballots. Dion didn't lead until the third. That was novel in an important way. Steve Mackenzie King won the first delegate Liberal leadership convention in 1948, every leader of the party had led the field on every ballot at every leadership convention. Winning was a simple matter of walking into the convention with more of the party behind you than anyone else. Dion had far less support within the party and the caucus than Michael Ignatieff and Bob Rae did. Neither man placed behind his back, or not much, but it was an inherently destabilizing situation.

"I think it was intended for everybody," said a former Rae supporter who wound up walking closely with Dion during the campaign. "People certainly understood Dion and his boundless energy, so they had respect for him. But he was never considered, quite, one of the players. I think people were just incredulous. 'Is he our leader? How did that happen?'"

With shaky support behind him and a long odds fight ahead, Dion needed a few timely political assets. A cool head, a decisive manner, a focused agenda, a methodical analysis of his opponent's weaknesses. Dion had none of that. What he did have was conviction and tenacity. He would need them for a ride that starts off rough and never really gets better.

JACQUES BOUCHARD/CP



THREE: THE FIELD WIDENS

# Flushing out the real enemy

**EARLY IN THE CAMPAIGN** a report of what might be called the Sweetest-Blast trilemma, Harper let his campaign staff take him into a rooming house for breakfast with travelling campaign reporters for an on-the-road session. Not just coffees and coffee, but cameras and boom microphones. It took some talking. Harper's new communications director, a boyish 31-year-old Saskatchewan-born veteran of Reform party politics named Kory Teneycke, could hardly believe he'd actually won this argument.

When the meeting happened in an east-end Toronto hotel, the questions from reporters were aggressive. Harper was guarded but he was nothing and drank only water. Yet something about the unaccustomed setting made him open up. He wound up delivering detailed comments on strategy, his read of the electoral map, the flaws in the other parties' game plans, and his own evolution as a politician.

"Every campaign we've had, whether it was a leadership campaign or a national campaign, don't let yourself in," he said. "We might come out and say to you that everything was fine. But in private, we sit down every time and we go through what did we do right, and what did we do wrong." He was delivering little karate chops to the table for emphasis. "And we do it brutally honestly and every single time." chop chop chop. "We've made changes in terms of strategy. We've made changes in terms of personnel. And I've tried to make changes in myself."

He had told someone, he couldn't remember when, that lead-in keep making the same mistakes until, some or fewer, those mistakes catch up. He decided he wouldn't let that happen again. "And what I've vowed to myself, at least in this position as leader of a national party, is that we will look at our mistakes and try to make sure we do it differently the next time."

This is the Harper management style. **ON DAY ONE**, Layton flew straight into Harper's riding to "apply for his job."

stern chair. Creative destruction. Nobody is indispensable. Harper had given one communications director, William Harris, his walking papers weeks after winning the seat election. He had fired his chief of staff in mid-2006. And when it became clear he would not have to fight an election in the spring of 2008, he said the summer's response to carry on another ship. Teneycke, the soft-spoken but sometimes ruthless strategist who had seemed devoted to the Harper operation, was replaced on Canada Day as chief of staff by the long-time Ontario provincial Conservative strategist Guy Gorman. Gorman wanted a new communications voice. Benoit Hudon had answered a defense of Harper's approach. Conservatives from shooting themselves in the foot had limited their ability to score points against their opponents. On Gorman's counsel, Harper replaced her with Teneycke, who had worked with Gorman. Ontario politics. Teneycke gave reporters far more information and access to cabinet ministers than Bush had. But he made it go on the basis of personal rapport with the information.

A week after the 2006 election, Patrick Murray was back at work identifying flaws in the strategy and looking for areas of potential growth. Some were obvious. Perhaps the breakthrough in Quebec could be missed. Harper and his campaign manager, Doug Furley, launched an ambitious candidate search. Mackenzie had learned that one person was McMaster they approached, without success, was Raymond Chabot, the nephew of Jean Chrétien and a former ambassador to Washington and Peru.

Other areas of growth were less obvious. They would take over Harper's about doing the work. Jason Kenney, the young Calgary MP, was put in charge of outreach to ethnic communities. The Liberal had spent decades courting ethnic voters, so Kenney often met polite distrust or worse. But he had Harper's confidence, an essential necessary for

**The NDP had one thing it hadn't before: bags full of cash to buy ads**

detail, and smearing opponents on the embryonic and ethnic-community reception circuit. Kennedy scored an early victory when he persuaded Harper, over the Foreign Affairs Department's objections, to abandon visa acquisition system for visitors from several ex-Communist countries in the European Union. The same European dispute in Canada contains millions of votes, Kennedy told his boss in March. They would notice this gesture. "These visa restrictions are going to be dropped some day. The department wants us to do it after the Americans and after the election. Why not do it before the Americans—and before an election?"

Harper liked the sound of that. A bureaucratic delegation from Foreign Affairs had toured Europe after Christmas and was months

before his victory. The first "Not a Leader" TV ads featured Dion taking heavy fire from Michael Ignatieff in the Toronto Liberal leadership debate. Ignatieff says, "Stoppage, we didn't get it done?" Dion's voice jumps an octave. "This isn't fair! You think it's easy to make progress?" The ads were on-air by the end of January, only seven weeks after Dion's victory. That's not a long time, but if Ignatieff or Fort had won, the ads would have started before the new weekend.

"We actually had creative ready to go to court," a senior Conservative said last, using ad-industry jargon for strikes and Ignatieff ads that were within a couple days of being ready to air. "The strategy with Fox was attacking people of the distance in

JEAN CHÉRIEN met with Dion and Knibber before a rally just prior to voting day



away from supporting Harper didn't bother waiting. He dropped the restrictions in the spring. After that there were times when the suburbs of the Canadian Politics Congress was so belated with phones of cabinet ministers and seats of government announcements it looked like the Conservative party website.

This was especially true because the Conservative party website itself more often resembled some frantic financial prank named as Stephen Dion.

In the final days of this campaign, a senior Liberal strategist told Maclean's, "the five-week wild period is a distraction. If we lose this thing, it was lost at the beginning of 2002, within two months after Dion became leader."

For a man who had spent a decade in senior roles in two predecessors' governments, Dion was not well known when he became leader. He needed to be defined. As he sat at his defining himself, the Conservative act to win defining him. His opponents had more success than he did.

That's even though they were caught flat-

## So high were Tory hopes in Quebec, they approached Raymond Chénier to run for them

Dion's first half decade as the province's NDP premier during a recession. "The Ignatieff staff was a difficult type of strategy. It was sowing seeds of dissent within the Liberal party. It was raising all the issues on which Ignatieff differed from the Liberal history and pushing those. So the strategy on Ignatieff was not to destroy him, but to create discussion within the Liberal party. All the staff he had that Liberals didn't like. Supporters for the Iraq war. Oddly enough, the strategy was to liken Ignatieff to Harper on a bunch of staff. And to make the Liberals second guess why they chose this guy?"

Dion? A right. And he must accomplish them, the Clancy Act that taught to write a rule book for future Quebec secession referendums, closely resembled work Harper had done on the unity file for the Reform party. It took more than a month for Marzari to find the right handle for the guy: that he didn't exactly fill anyone or make strong men tremble. Not a Leader because the shape Ignatieff was a perfect testament in the ads, because setting Liberals against one another was a key Conservative strategic imperative.

One way for Dion to rebut the charges was to act like a leader. It turned out that was hard. The morning after he became leader, he appointed a transition team headed by Rod Bryden, an Ottawa businessman, and Manuel Massé, the career bureaucrat who had preceded him as Chénier's national senior manager. Bryden was supposed to represent hard-nosed business sense. Massé's job, as Liberal leader said, was "to teach Dion how to be a leader." Which was odd because Massé had never been a leader himself.

At any rate the transition team never got a chance to deliver a coherent strategy and organization. "Dion moved too quickly. He didn't let the transition team do its work," the insider said. The leader's staff weren't selected, it was kind of a mess, the space that didn't fit together to form a team. Dion had spent seven years watching the Chénier operation, cool and disciplined, and now watching the Marzari board, rambling and chaotic. Oddly his style was closer to Marzari's. People came and went. Massé lasted a few months as principal secretary before his health made him leave. Later nobody could recall precisely what he had done, not because he hadn't done anything, but because, in the general gossip of Dion's office, individual efforts sank as if in tar.

In October 2002, fully 10 months after he became leader and on the eve of a Conservative Throne Speech that could have had no election, Dion decided to replace his Quebec lieutenant, Hall Aylmer MP Marcel Fournier. He offered the job to Donat Codreanu, a scrappy MP from Montreal's Bourassa riding. Fournier gave up in a half hour: he heard Codreanu had been offered the job. But then Codreanu, no great fan of Dion's, declined to take it. This was bad. Running short of options, Dion asked Pablo Rodriguez, another Montreal MP. Rodriguez said no, too. Finally, late in March, the job went to Céline Hervieux-Payette, a senator with a fiery demeanour and a tendency to take disagreements as proof of disloyalty. The bested choice of a Quebec organizer was



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BOB RAE was supposed to bring some NDP voters back to the Liberals. The Tories turned earlier attacks by spinners (right) against Rae.

something Dion never stop saying to

The complete rule of Liberal enlightening, confidence, decisions delayed and revisited, would fill more space than we have here. But the spinners that even though Dion had nearly nine years to prepare for an election, he made it to September 2008 with very little to show for it. He had a policy, the Green Shift. He had a campaign staff, almost none of whom had worked on a national campaign before. He had a shock French accent, a long list of topics he wanted to discuss but no strategy for rolling them out in a coherent campaign script, and the crushing burden of all those Conservative ads. "We put him in a basement so deep into the personality wouldn't receive," one Conservative said.

One more obstacle facing the Liberals was that they weren't alone in selling the afflictions of voters who wouldn't support Harper in fact, the opposition was fierce then even.

It seems as if that Jack Layton has more focus, a leader edge, a bolder sense during election campaigns than the rest of the time, you have a sleep cycle. Much of the reason is Brian Topp, a long-time staffer for Roy Romanow's Saskatchewan government. Topp is executive director of ACTRA, the performing arts union, and he was his third campaign as the chief strategist for the national New Democratic Party. Topp is from the (unlabeled) branch of the NDP that prefers winning to offering high-minded advice to somebody else's government. With Layton he has delivered results that upset Liberals,

because growing NDP support was a big irritant in Paul Martin's declining fortunes. But Topp and Layton weren't done yet.

"The vote has gone from a million votes in 2000 to two million in '04 to 2.5 million," he said haltingly through this campaign. The danger was that those voters might not stick around. Two of the worst elections in NDP history were Liberal comebacks, in 1974 and 1993. Fortunately, Dion's shaky delivery gave the New Democrats an unexpected for sure a leadership edge.

"Although the public doesn't seem interested, we're all talking about it," he said, "and we're all talking about it." "Although the public doesn't seem interested, we're all talking about it," he said, "and we're all talking about it."

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annually ready. We had our plan, we had our calendar worked out, our platform was written. We knew what we were going to say. We had our locations all secured, and it was just all that.

During through the clutter was easy enough. Layton simply had to display himself on the cheek. Already on Aug. 31, when Harper invited him to a 24-hour drive-in on the long pipeline to the election, Layton said that whenever Harper decided to "quit," Topp would apply for his job. "On the first day of the campaign, Layton flew straight to Harper's Calgary riding.

It was a tall order. The NDP had 30 seats at stake. It would be hardy, if Layton wanted a majority government, would another 51 or so to that. There is a Monty Python sketch in which they jump the movie script. Roy Orbison from New Orleans, who has taken it into his head to long jump 26 miles across the English Channel. An interviewee also how far he jumped previously. "Election time, so when at Mosquito Park on July 22," Orbison replied proudly to the warning. "But I have done nearly 12 feet earlier."

But when Roy Orbison was weighed down with a sackful of his main sponsor's good salt—half a hundredweight of bricks from the Chippewas Indian Community—Layton's NDP had a much more welcome burden: sacks of cash. The party headquarters had accepted directly as value on the Ottawa-Quebec market and the bank was impressed with Layton's leadership numbers, so with the

headquarters in collateral the party was able to take out a junior loan to finance its most ambitious campaign ever.

"We're going to spend more on advertising and on campaign than we spent in all of 2000," party spokesman Brad Lunn said. "Just over \$7 million." They'd found ad firms that had never worked for a political party before. "We want our ads to cut through." Hence the Quebec ad with the marching armies of doors behind Justin's exploding head.

In 2004 and 2006 the Liberals had viewed the NDP as a passive intruder for votes that Paul Martin could look upon the campaign's first week. Dion had the time to hope this time Bob Rae, a former NDP premier of Ontario, had made a mistake in his working. Layton, with a built-in new discourse, a hefty bank loan and a declared interest in replacing the Liberals on the political checkbook, had no intention of making Rae's work easy.

Layton's Green party leader he was now to federal politics. In his years in obscure do-or-die of the Sierra Club of Canada, she had been non-partisan and even non-partisan. In

## Elizabeth May's high profile helped the Greens, even if some stalwarts weren't sure they could trust her

a former Green candidate, for the party leader in 2006. The media also thought the leader should support all the party's candidates, not just some, overheard as a function of the national horse race.

May joined the Greens as a grassroots leader for the Greens, and her media profile after years as a TV sailing host gave her an easy victory. But in April 2007 she ended up in silence.

tried to calling May Dion's "star candidate in Central Nova."

For the NDP, the danger from the Greens was that because the fourth-place NDP could afford competition from a still smaller party. But especially because the NDP had a hard enough time persuading supporters to support in the face of probable Conservative victory. A culture in the Globe and Mail, early in the campaign, made the danger obvious.

The columnist, John Barber, opened by calling on "all progressive men and women to bury the New Democratic Party." Why? Because Layton and Harper had made a deal. May was the "reformed leader" of the Greens, the one who was a rallying force for the Liberals. That opposition had cost Layton days of furious negotiations from NDP supporters, and finally he'd dropped his opposition. Instead, Harper released it. May would become the first Green leader to get this danger to make her case to the Canadian electorate.

But that the Globe's Barber, being a rallying force for the Liberals was an excellent idea. "NDP's primary must be to make it clear in the next election, which brought an enormous wave of votes to power as a result of our own left wing vote split," he wrote.

To Barber, it was obvious May would not be such a spoiler. His column ended with a simple wish: "Go Green!"

It was the kind of column that made New Democrats frown. "Frustrating," Layton said when asked about it. But Barber's sense of what the Greens would campaign only what they became an endorsement before the NDP of the Liberals. "We was also making a long time to Green. Many wondered whether the leader was more than a fair weather friend to the cause she now, at least occasionally, led.

In the campaign's third week, May took a Via train northeast from Vancouver to Halifax in a version of the wilderness campaign of old. An interview the gave to *Star* news as could not have contained those who wondered whether the would campaign for Green votes no matter what. "Harper and Layton have their plan. Nothing can interfere with their plan. Their plan, to destroy the Liberal party, is a route to electoral success for both of them," she said. "But my concern about climate means that I can't play into the game that says it doesn't matter if Harper is elected."

The Liberals had elected a decade ago because conservatives were divided, the NDP was weak and the Green vote barely registered. Now the tables were turned. The first round elections was just another on Dion's long list of setbacks to power.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANK CORREIA

the last week of the 2006 election she was one of the most prominent members of Think Twice, a group of British Canadians who had urged voters not to vote as a way that might help Harper. They were careful not to say so publicly, but the obvious intention was that they wanted Canadians to vote Liberal to stop Harper.

That position was at the heart of the argument between May and David Chelmonenko,

with Dion the Liberals would run no candidate against her in Central Nova, where she had made the audacious decision to run against incumbent Conservative cabinet minister Peter MacKay.

Conservatives immediately supported the new campaign pace was part of a deeper alliance. May had been fearful about the prospect of a Harper government in 2006. Now she was joining with Dion. Conservatives



FOUR-SLIPPING AWAY

# Uneasy streaks

SOMETIMES IT WAS when the leaders were closest that it was easiest to see the differences on their styles. On Wednesday, Sept. 10, the Liberal and the Conservative were both in southwestern Ontario, a Christian Liberal stronghold that voted sharply Conservative in 2006. Harper's daughter-in-law, Wilband, was about 160 km away from Dion's event in London. The ideological and strategic differences on display were much further apart.

Today Dion's campaign script had taken him down. He needed to talk about minority research and student aid in front of photo-genic students. So they sent him to the University of Western Ontario. "Nothing could

for the latter. Dion would add 100,000 "access bursaries" for Aboriginals and other under-represented groups. He would increase funding for the tuition costs of university research by 60 per cent. And he would borrow \$25 billion to pay for 20 years' worth of needed bursaries.

Taken together, Dion's program on this day alone was worth perhaps \$1 billion, in addition to the cost of borrowing for his bursary endeavor. Near the end of the campaign, his mother and assistants would give the Liberals an A- from the Canadian Federation of Students. But Liberal candidates trying to explain the plan would have a hard time avoiding the producer's target market: no children. "This isn't realistic." To top it off, he would ban sales of cigarettes in packages of less than 10.

Taken together, Harper's program on this day would cost little more than the price of the photo-opportunity. Their effect on citizens among children would probably be not be impossible to measure. But what mattered was that they would cut through the din of the day's news if you heard about these.

"Without a doubt," a Conservative campaign insider would say later, "scripting" the best case of the best-located parts of this campaign. In 2006 scripting had been the job of Jean Rossouw, a specialist in economic policy and a long-time Harper ally from Calgary. But already in the heart stretch of the campaign, as his second was being out of the Conservative war room and back to running the H&M in Keweenaw public relations firm's Calgary office, Guy Gorman had taken an increasingly prominent role in the day-to-day campaign. Now, in 2008, scripting was Gorman's main show. He kept finding ways to get an interview and in play out of sometimes very minor announcements.

Dion was announcing \$100 million a day. Harper was announcing \$10 million a day, and on the evening news we would play them to a tie," the Conservative insider said.

This was the triumph of Harper's relentlessly retail approach to politics. If the stars, the backdrops, the props and the talking points were Gorman's, the strategy was Murnett's. The young campaign planner from Toronto had sharply focused Harper's next steps when he joined the Conservative campaign between the 2004 and 2006 elections. He could not see the point of any policy that wouldn't be noticed and welcomed by working-class and middle-class voters with families. Instead of all-out advertising campaigns to convince the bankers, Murnett had argued for the GST cut. But the GST cut was a massive change to the way Ottawa collects revenue. If anything, Murnett was said to be proffering of smaller programs that symbolized Harper's fondness for the ordinary working self.

Mostly before the campaign, Conservatives were (ironically) already excited about Harper's speech to the 41st annual construction apprentices graduation in Stornoway, Ont. He revealed them of the handy little grant his government offered to apprentices, to employers who took them on, and to anyone who needed tools for a trade. A hundred young carpenters and bricklayers gave Harper a standing ovation. "In 1993," one Conservative said, "those kids would have been cheering for Jean Chrétien."

## A pollster sent him a DVD of 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington'

ing the entire of target and details he had said into while announcing the program. Then there was Harper. At the Casa Dante in Whitford, the Prime Minister vowed to ban tobacco products that were flavoured to taste like bubble gum and cartoon candy. "These products are packaged in candy, and that's totally unacceptable," he said. Clearly

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step was from coming to "Western," he said while a half-dozen fresh-faced students stood behind him, smiling at the back of his head. "I would have juggled him."

It would have been slowed down by all the paperwork. Dion was actually announcing a simplification of student aid, but it was not easy to tell from the salad of numbers and program names he was tossing around. Under a Liberal government a range of student credits and bursaries would be replaced with an unified education grant payable every three months. At the same time as GST rebates, for any student eligible

Periodically during the 2008 campaign, Dion would re-emerge to hold new voters for hours. When such remarkable playdown television, they usually drew chuckles in the Conservative war room, the insider said. "We're so cynical, we laugh at him. Like, internally 'We're so focused on small, little bits, targeted outcomes that we say, 'Well, that's not gonna work.'"

The search for novel ways to catch voters' attention drove Harper's campaign team far outside Canada for ideas. Many, including *Teaseylee*, were furnished by one set of competitive data. About 75 per cent of Canadian adults read, at least occasionally, but typically only 60 per cent admit to having read, watched or listened to the news from any source yesterday. That missing 15 per cent was like catnip to the Conservatives: people who couldn't be reached by any traditional method but were going to vote anyway. How could those voters be reached? For a while, the Conservatives were frustrated by ad-free hangers, one page sheets full of full-

TO REACH WOMEN VOTERS, the Tories bought ad spots on shows like *Grey's Anatomy*



ing points that could hang from a voter's doorknob until he got home from work. A similar instant led the Conservatives to try buying ad time on the little TV screens that adorn some gas station pumps. [The gas station ad company firstly backed out of the deal. A few weeks later, Bank of America's U.S. presidential campaign tried the same gas station puke. Obama, too, had no chance to offer the ad even just got cold feet.]

At one point the quest for ideas on reaching uninterested voters took the Conservative campaign team overseas. In the summer of 2007, Mulroney and Doug Finley, Harper's campaign manager, flew to London and Paris for tips from the British Conservatives and Nicolas Sarkozy's UMP party.

They had a long and productive session with their counterparts in London, but in Canadian voters' own time, they were having the devil's own time getting them to return their calls. They considered outsourcing. Finally they landed an appointment with David Martynson, the Sarkozy campaign staffer who would wind up serving briefly as President Nicolas Sarkozy's communications director.

On a meeting Friday day, the two Canadians were wondering why Martynson, dressed in an impeccably right-fitting suit and shiny shoes, took to his phone. Finley suffered in the heat and the unaccustomed conditions of a suit and pocket. Finally Martynson asked how he could help. The two voters said they were interested in campaign tips. Martynson's advice was capably inappropriate to the Canadian context. He said UMP campaigns are based on secret reaction votes on the beach. Martynson said they weren't really looking for retail advice. Their questions had to do more with marketing.

"Ah! Marketing!" Martynson urged the two men to follow him down into a waiting van, which took them one to another building. Ah ha. This would be good. Storyboards. Web made-up. The paraphernalia of a winning campaign.

Martynson took them to a UMP war room deep in the lobby of an office building. He gave them baseball caps and T-shirts with the logo of Sarkozy's party. Then the pace de resister. "Hold on your horses!" He gave the bewildered Finley and Martynson heads of UMP-branded condoms. "The meeting was over."

Despite the odd trademarked message, the Conservatives' fascination for niche politics remained. And the techniques the Conservatives had learned in 2006 and refined since then were key to taking and holding a lead among women voters.

Campaign staffers said the strategy was a mixture of style, substance and surgical execution. The swivel-neck ads were designed to prime the electorate before the campaign started. At every stop, bloggers were to have a positive note in his speech and newspaper remarks. ("We're going to make it, never cease

## Frantic calls and memos flooded into Liberal party headquarters but Dion pushed back against any 'gimmicks'

ment with David Martynson, the Sarkozy campaign staffer who would wind up serving briefly as President Nicolas Sarkozy's communications director.

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to be around," he said in the *Charlie's* [box])

On the road, he rolled out pitches designed to appeal to families and especially to mothers. Personal loans, a first-time homebuyer's credit, and the carbon-candy tobacco ban were on that list.

Finally, the Conservatives were careful to put their campaign where women would see it. They devoted far more of their ad budget than in 2006 to television with a large female audience, such as the Food Network, HGTV and the dozen-in-one drama *Grey's Anatomy*. Several days into the campaign, a Harris DeLima poll showed that 22 per cent of respondents, both male and female, reported seeing "a great deal" of Conservative advertising. Only eight per cent said they'd seen a great deal of Liberal advertising and three per cent for NDP ads. The same firm's poll also showed the Conservatives opening an early lead over every party among rural women and those over the age of 50. The Tories and Liberals would trade the lead among younger and urban women throughout the campaign, but surely being competitive in that market constituted a breakthrough for the Conservatives.

**DOOR, MEANWHILE**, was pushing back at every attempt by his staff to make other his policies or his campaign digestible or relevant to disengaged voters. At the heart of his problem was what the NDP's Tappin called Dion's "very big anchor," the Green Shift with its carbon tax.

Michael Menzies, the veteran Christian conservative who runs the Toronto *Star* Pollster, was back working for the party after the Martin crew had thrown him out. In the spring he had tested every argument for and against the Green Shift with focus groups. Some people say it's an intrusion, [government] tax grab: what do you think? Some people say it's our chance to do our best for a 21st-century economy in a greener world: how does that grab you? Support for the argument in favour was "very middling," some one familiar with the research told Maclean's. Support for the argument against the Green Shift was "incredibly strong."

Menzies told Dion the policy would be elected inside. "We're late in the marketplace of Dion's election plan."

Well, sometimes correction is good. It might be time to sugar the pill a bit, or at least to accompany the Green Shift with policies that might bring out some children down to earth. A ban on cheap junky savings in water usage? Dion was taking it well. Plugging water discount light bulbs out in favour of fluorescent? "We had that before John [David] did. A Liberal source said referring to the Conservative environmental minister who even-



ELIZABETH MAY (top) with deputy Green leader Adriane Carr, on her (second) day while she was Jack Layton post over the NDP platform before 1st debate in Toronto

ally mentioned the environmental ban.

Maybe Dion could plant one in every where he went. Announce a program to plant 10 million seed trees, one for every Canadian. A gimmick, he said. The one planting idea went to Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty, who loved it. The premier's website has a bowl during any photos of McGuinty with shovels, soldiers, Boy Scout troops, sailors, senators and so on.

At one point, despairing of Dion's ability to master the vocabulary of retail politics, Microdon gave the Liberal leader a gift: a DVD of *My Sweetie* in Washington, Frank Capra's classic tale of a plucky and idealistic young woman played by Jennifer Stewart. If the movie had any effect, the pollster never heard about it.

By mid-campaign the Liberal campaign was receiving frantic memos from all over

about the leader's performance. At his law office in Toronto, national campaign co-chairman Senator David Smith said that in less than an hour he'd received calls from two former cabinet ministers, Herb Dhali and Anne McLellan, and from Heather Chisholm at the National Women's Liberal Convention. And were they happy calls? Long pause. "Well...they're happy in the sense that the family is there," Smith said, "and there's some good positive ideas."

As Dion sank in the polls, offering one cheerful and unambiguously optimistic speech after another, plans for some kind of course correction came in from every corner of the country. Several members of the B.C. campaign executive had a long bossy dinner and fired off a memo. One B.C. reporter said later he was drawing inspiration from the harrowing battle sequence in the beginning

DAVID J. PHILLIPS/GETTY IMAGES/PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES HARTLEY

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES HARTLEY



DIEN MADE AN ISSUE of student aid, but the message was lost in a mountain of details

of the Julie Lawrence from Amnesty after Goss, which depicts Soviet Red Army regulars who don't even have enough guns to fight off the German invaders at Stalingrad. "The one with the rifle shoots. The one without follows him. When the one with the rifle gets killed, the one who is following picks up the rifle and shoots," the organizer said. "I say that every morning at the staff meeting."

One memo to the Liberal campaign arrived at 5 a.m. one morning from Marolles. The provocationist was a premier Dion inside in his underwear to spend \$240 million against the mountain men's heads. "Canadians do not care about the rate of landing mountain men," the Marolles memo said. "Each should be awarded because Stéphane Dion cares about the average Canadian and shares their values." Banning the country with loss of profits and dollar figures left the Liberals looking like "cold-hearted accountants."

Suddenly, though, the Conservatives could not take much pleasure from the Liberals' discomfiture. They had serious trouble of their own. And it was coming from a surprising corner: Quebec.

**EARLY IN AUGUST** *Canwest News* had reported that the Harper government was cutting a \$4.7-million program designed to send artists abroad to promote Canadian culture. When *Canwest's* reporter David Allen called the PMO for comment, he was told the money "went to groups that would make the employees of my typical Canadian." Those included the "general council" and former CBC broadcaster Avi Lewis, and a Toronto band with an unrecognizable name. "I think there's a reasonable expectation by taxpayers that they won't fund the world trend of the rock stars, ideological activists or fringe and alternative groups," Allen's source said.

When a week's various news organizations were pegging the total cuts to assorted arts programs at \$45 million. The cut-to-arts-overseas of the PMO's political deficit was down particularly badly in Quebec. By late August hundreds of artists were staging protests in Montreal and Toronto. "They don't want to recognize the existence of art in our society, and that's appalling," actress Marc Tibo said in Montreal. "I'm here with all my power to say 'no,' we can, and [out-

**Harper strategists went to Paris for marketing tips. 'Ah, marketing!' said a Sarkozy aide as he handed them branded condoms.**

there] is an essential good."

For a very long time the Conservatives had no serious interest about the backlash. Artists didn't vote Conservative anyway. And frankly a few pissed elites were good for business. From time to time, Conservatives speaking on the party's behalf on television commercials showed world phone the party for talking points on this issue or that. Sometimes all they would be told was, "Throw a little red meat to the base." Montreal artists, in this view, constituted a particularly tender cut.

But it's a funny thing about artists: they can be creative. A satirical video appeared on YouTube, showing singer Michel Jovanotti facing a sluggish panel of Ontario arts bureaucrats

who don't understand his French and won't give him a grant. (It was funnier in French.) Opposition leaders were quick to seize a weakness. Layton and Bloc leader Gilles Duceppe organized their campaign team so they could attend a Montreal concert in protest against the cuts. The Conservatives want to "turn off the floodlights on our stories, on our hearts, on our souls," Layton told the crowd. "We say that creative industries are an essential part of our country's future."

Harper was in dire straits as emerging values-billions-white opposition were so explicit it. In Saskatoon he called the cuts "a little more for some."

"You know, I think when ordinary, working people come home, turn on the TV and see... a bunch of people at a rich gala all subsidized by the taxpayers, during their subsidies aren't high enough when they leave the subsidies have actually gone up, I'm not sure that's something that resonates with ordinary people."

Maybe Harper already knew how much trouble this policy was getting him in, because when francophone reporters asked him to repeat that remark in French, a similar occurrence on every campaign, he declined. Soon, however, the Conservatives' Quebec problems, stemming from a peculiar taste deafness, would not be limited to the arts.

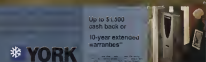
In Ottawa, Harper once used measures to toughen up the Youth Criminal Justice Act, including the possibility of life sentences for 14-year-olds convicted of serious violent crimes. This was drastic for pop. He expected a fight on this and he expected his fight to energize Conservatives. "We're looking forward to talking on the criminologists," a senior Conservative had said on the eve of the campaign's launch.

Here again, Quebec was turning out to be a distinct society. There are a lot of crimeologists there, and they cling to an irrational consensus that harsh punishment, especially for young offenders, is an absolute to enforce. Again, the Bloc and NDP grabbed hard back against Harper in Quebec. The one-on-one battle against the arts cuts and Harper's law-and-order stance started to have an effect. The Bloc scored up toward 40 per cent in Quebec polls. The Conservatives, who had been flirting with 30 per cent support or higher, collapsed to 26 per cent or lower. At those levels, Harper could forget about picking up seats in Quebec. The challenge now would be to salvage the seats he already had.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY LAWRENCE

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It's time to get comfortable

# 'The icy blue eyes of love'

**INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY** is no help at all for a party that has performed badly in the state election every two years. Of the 15 or so people travelling with the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, precisely one had ever done an election tour before in a political staffer. And that was Albert Marone, a former Radio Canada television producer who handled logistics. The others had been around Ottawa politics for years, but in this business of keeping a tour moving and staying, they were all brand new. The rookie crew included Andrew Brown and Geoffrey Montpetit, long-time Dion advisors; Craig Fergus, the party's third national director; newly Disraeli-made leader, Mike McNair, the leader's economic policy adviser, still in his 20s and working on a fresh growth of red beard; and Sarah Iain, press secretary Mark Dunn, Dion's communications director—his fourth since becoming leader—had been on leaders' tours before, but only in the back of the plane, as a reporter with Sun Media.

The role of press officer was played by Ann Macdonald, 62, a senior from Ontario. Macdonald had been a CTV reporter for decades who lost his job in one of the network's periodic random staff-shuffle-ups. Communicating phone calls from Chretien turned, eventually, into a job in the old man's communications director. When Chretien retired (from public life in 2001), one of his last official acts was to put Jim Munson in the Senate.

Older staffers are not a role that comes naturally to Munson. In 1996 he got into a shouting match with Pierre Trudeau when Trudeau refused to answer journalists' questions at a news conference. "They told me I was going to be the arbitrator," he said of his role with Dion. "No! The staffer's! I used to be the s---t disturber."

By Friday, Sept. 26, Dion needed exhibiting. The midday tracking poll from Pulse Research showed the worst result of the campaign: 49 per cent for the Conservatives, 25 per cent for the Liberals, 29 per cent for the NDP. If Canadians voted that way, it would guarantee Harper a majority. The Liberal number was about points lower than John Turner had won in 1984, the party's lowest popular vote in modern times.

And now, as Dion was preparing for an event at a farm in Belmar, Ont., word of

Harper's morning event started to make its way back into the U.S. and a global liquidity crisis fast advancing, the Liberals had been having Harper heard on his banding of the economy. Now Harper had crossed Dion of "trying to drive down confidence in the Canadian economy without Canadians actually cheering for there to be a recession."

Dion was furious. In the campaign's first week Harper had said Dion's Green Shift was a thinly disguised federal trough that would release agricultural subsidies in Quebec. Now he was telling people Dion wanted the economy to tank. Before the event on the farm, Dion tumbled with Munson and with Herb Metchie, another veteran Liberal organizer who had stayed in the private sector while offering Dion constant counsel. The two men, frankly, thought the emotion they saw in the leader might be an asset. They told him to let it show when he addressed the crowd.

So Dion let loose. At the Belmar farm and again in a rally in London that night, he dashed the misperception he had been using for his speeches and simply roared. "He led today in order to make cheap shots," he said of Harper. "This is uncharacteristic. And it says a lot about him and nothing about me." He said he would debate the



**YOUNG TOES:** Rachel Harris (left) and her son watch Harper at a rally in Hamilton, the PM walks his daughter, Rachel, to school

economy any time with Harper "if he wants to discuss it so he can shut it."

The crowd at both events loved it. Dion led local newsmen in London, Hamilton, and Windsor. "You did what you were supposed to," Munson told the boss.

For weeks they had been working on getting Dion microphone-ready for more than a decade, since his early days as a minister. He had refused to cut long speeches shorter, refused to rehearse his delivery, shown disdain for the idea that complex arguments must be boiled down. Now they were making progress. Dunn, who can be a bear of a man when provoked, was actually having some success getting Dion to repeat and repeat a speech's key lines until he could deliver them persuasively. Munson's self-assigned task was to get Dion to understand that the emotive line wasn't necessarily a betrayal of the line's literal line.

"Well, so, what does enhanced productivity mean?"

"Jobs?"

"Well, why don't we say that? And what do jobs mean?"

"Jobs?"

"Well, we could say that too."

So as Dion headed into the weekend, he was learning—gradually, late-in-trust his critics on the stump, to let his advisers go ahead, and, at least occasionally, to prefer words with emotional power over words with many syllables.

On Saturday night at Stromway, the Opposition leader's residence, Dion had Metchie over for dinner. Metchie had raw numbers from Munson's overnight polls. He told Dion: "Your numbers are starting to move because people are starting to see passion and conviction." There would need both, because the leaders' debates were now only days away.

**THE DEBATE** over the debates, of course, had already happened: Dion and May had a non-aggression pact—he had announced in April 2007 that he would run to candidate against her in Central Nova. They also had a bit of a mutual admiration society going. She greatly preferred him to prime minister over Harper. Dion called her "cousinhood" for saying so.

That was enough for Layton said Harper to restrain her bitterness. But when their criticism made to block her appearing at the debate during negotiations with the broadcaster consortium that runs the debate, Layton heard an earful from his own supporters. So the NDP's national campaign staff it was painfully obvious why they did not need competitive strategy for voters that might be shaken loose from the Conservatives, Liberals and Bloc. But the party's supporters were less inclined to think strategically about whether a nice person with values



FOR HARPER/CFP PHOTOGRAPHER YVONNE BELL

kind of idea that one should be harmed from speaking. Results to the party were overwhelmingly against keeping May out. Layton couldn't get his message out because reporters only wanted to know about the debates. "It was a distraction," Levesque said. So Layton agreed. Harper had said for months he didn't want the Liberal "star candidate in Central News," as he called May, competing with "far leaders." But he couldn't beat a lame hideout. May would participate.

The person for whom this was the biggest challenge was Harper. He would now have

shown off to much of the world. And Harper had one order from his staffers to never let a nuke him, and to never stop staring at May with what one adviser called "the icy blue eyes of love."

"I'll know that how he reacted and dealt with her could potentially be one wrong move, one wrong look, one wrong word, one wrong reaction, he captured and just drove away that vote that they worked so hard to get."

So Michael Cassa, the CEO of Hill & Knowlton Canada, had two jobs: to drill Harper for the debates. The last important

it was a profoundly defensive strategy. Layton was relaxed. Like Harper he was on his third round of leaders' debates (Duceppe was on his fifth). Dion and May were newbies (NDP's insignia were barely aware that, with the U.S. vice-presidential debate between Joe Biden and Sarah Palin on the same night in the English language debate, they might have a smaller audience). They decided days from the debate, rejected all questions on newscasts over the next few nights, might be even more on the trail than before, so they loaded Jack up with some

game. Mark Watson, a Newfoundlander who had worked on the Atlantic coast in Martin's PMO, was Layton.

Dion is confident about a lot of things, but he is especially confident about his debating skills. For months Conservatives had been looking forward to an election because they had hope of Dion on a political talk show, days after he became Liberal leader, telling the CBC's Don Newman he would win the English language leaders' debate when it came.

In fact the Liberal team had their work cut out for them. Dion's prepared answers,

one said they were overexpanding him, but now that had a surprise in his speech that would leave Liberal confidence at rock bottom needed to be boosted.

While Rae watched, TV monitors showed a speech Harper had delivered on the eve of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. Next to Harper were images of John Howard, then Canada's prime minister, giving a speech of his own 10 hours before Harper's.

They were the same speech.

For sentence after sentence, somebody had lifted Howard's arguments and given

messages nearly parroted out of his head. He called the war room and walked out of the plane, a big cloud at the news. His briefcase and overnight bag were on the airplane behind him, forgotten. An hour later a longtime Harper speech writer, Owen Loper, confirmed to the plagiarists and resigned from the campaign.

The Howard tapes didn't really affect the campaign, except to launch years of research from every party on an egg of Google searching to try to catch other parties in similar patterns of plagiarism. But the third speech



NO LONGER a boys' club: when Layton came in on May participating in the debates, Harper realized he couldn't be the lone balding

four people attacking him, not three. He was vulnerable on May's defining issue, the environment. Worst of all, that was a woman and he had a kisser.

"It circles back to the women-vote thing and the need for women to be heard, but they want more the calm," a Conservative close to Harper said. "A lot of time was spent in debate prep on getting Stephen ready about how to look at and react to Elizabeth May."

So they planned Harper down at a table with cameras all around and they put Lee Maloney, a longtime Reform, Canadian Alliance and Conservative spokesperson, next to him. Maloney had one brief "to be as aggressive as he could and try to pass the

job was to stand in as the Jack Layton imitator. The most important one was to drive the idea into the leader's head that he must be calm, reassuring, always on guard against the wrong move. And that he must look at everyone, but especially May, with the icy blue eyes of love.

## 'A lot of time was spent in prep on getting Stephen ready about how to look at May'

ing. They gave him one target. "We know who we're going after," he told "Stephen Harper. The rest is noise."

With the spitting economy becoming more and more of a national preoccupation, Dion trained his fire to a circle of Liberals who were closely associated with the former finance minister, Paul Martin. This caused growing concern among some Martin Liberals, but it had real logic to it. When they were in the Martin prime hand for debates, So Tim Murphy, Martin's former chief of staff, played Harper on the debate



TOUCHING SCENES: Finance Minister Jim Flaherty would lead victory in Ontario, while May would lead Ontario and her opponent would lead British Columbia

to the surprise of nobody, were laconic masterpieces for too long for the 47-second clock each leader would be required to obey. Dion's staff dutifully wrote about trimming his lines. While they were at it, they urged him to look, not at his terror most around the table, but at the camera. He'd want that of the national studio was that the leader was leaving a rough line of it.

While they were refining their game, the campaign continued without the leaders. On Monday, Michael Ignatieff gave a major economic speech. Bob Rae had a major affairs speech scheduled for Tuesday. Deploying the "team" was delicate business. Dion, Bob Rae and Ignatieff had to give the leader's speech, conversation with some support and more friends in caucus than Dion had. They had to know both men still wanted the job. In the last week, Dion had campaigned alone, and once reporters said the party's worst visible face had abandoned him. In the second they campaigned with him and every

them to Harper to permit. The effect of the side-by-side vote on was extraordinary. On a major foreign policy issue, here was Harper speaking with another man's words. It was forced a domestic opposition argument, that Harper got all his foreign policy ideas from conservatives in other countries. It undercut a cherished element of the Harper mythology, that he was his party's leading thinker and his own best speech writer. And it just made him look silly.

The Conservative biggest problem when the put on his show was that nobody could remember who wrote the speech. Harper couldn't remember. The one person who might know, Ken Boocker, was one of governments—no, the former Conservative war room soon learned, correctly so, on a plane between Calgary and Ottawa. The campaign went to Mary Tenebe, in still. Draft answers were prepared for any possibility. When Boocker's flight landed, he named his BlackBerry and it lit up with so many



did shift a little good morale from Harper's camp to Dion's. And that's where things stood at the French debate began on Wednesday night.

HARPER SMILED perhaps more than any man has smiled since Confederation and, alone among the leaders, called his opponents by their first names. Duceppe accused him, three times in the first five minutes of the debate, of "smothering the right idea." Layton said his environmental policy would be great for Boston. Dion reminded him of everything he had ever seen (Dion's way, such as the time he'd called Dion a fan of the Taliban for asking about prisoner abuse. Duceppe told him that by leaving Michael



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### Courting the lucrative business travel market

Reluctant airlines, hit hard by the soaring price of jet fuel—now twice what it was last year—are scrambling to stay in the game even while a sluggish economy has taken a bite out of passenger demand. Airlines have passed on some of their costs to passengers in the form of increased fares, fuel surcharges and special fees, cut routes and reduced capacity. But the intense competition among carriers means that, despite the bad news, airlines are constantly working to maintain customer loyalty and to operate more efficiently.

### Convenience with technology

Getting through security has never been more efficient for Air Canada's business passengers. The airline's Premium Security Clearance program, launched earlier this year, offers a special fast lane for business class passengers departing from Toronto, Montreal, Edmonton and Vancouver. Premium Security Clearance is also in place at several major U.S. airports, at Heathrow in London and Charles de Gaulle in Paris, and in Sydney, Australia and Zurich, Switzerland.

Checking in or changing flight details has become easier as well with Air Canada. Passengers can now receive their electronic boarding pass on their BlackBerry or smartphone. The service is currently available for boarding domestic Air Canada flights and departure to international (non-U.S.) destinations, including connecting flights, from 80 airports across Canada served by Air Canada and Air Canada Jazz. The boarding pass is sent as SMS text message, one with a 2-D barcode that will be scanned by an Air Canada agent prior to boarding.

Beginning in spring 2020, Air Canada will be the first Canadian airline to offer in-flight Wi-Fi. The airline signed an agreement with Airbus to offer its Gogo™ service to passengers on selected trans-border Airbus A320 flights. Gogo™ transforms a commercial airplane into a Wi-Fi hotspot with true in-flight Internet access for Wi-Fi enabled devices, such as laptops, smartphones and PDAs.

Pending regulatory approvals, the airline hopes to eventually offer the service system wide and provide seamless coverage from its Canadian cities to every Air Canada market in the continental U.S., says Charles McKee, the airline's VP, Marketing. "Air Canada provides staff on connecting Canada and the world and an important element of staying connected today is being on the Internet."

Another program that's garnering passenger loyalty is Air Canada's flight pass program, a prepaid package of electronic one-way flight credits launched in 2007. The Flight Pass for Business has 30 flight credits that up to eight different employees can use over a three-month period. For larger companies, there is the Corporate Pass that can be used by up to 200 employees over a three-month period. Passes are available for travel within Canada, and travel between Canada and various international destinations.

"Companies like it because it simplifies their travel management and lets them maintain a handle on their travel costs since they can manage it online. It's also good value," says Air Canada spokesman Peter Fitzpatrick.

## Comfort is paramount

Cathay Pacific Airways has launched a global marketing campaign to promote its innovative new cabin design. These designs were introduced into all three classes of travel at the same time across Cathay's entire medium- and long-haul fleet. By late 2012, 88 aircraft will have the new designs in place, including newly delivered aircraft and retrofits, says Alex Shum, Vice President Canada, Cathay Pacific Airways.

Understanding that its premium business travelers value comfort and passenger, Cathay offers more personal space, privacy

and entertainment options, says Shum. "We provide them with a travel experience that exceeds all expectations."

First class has one of the biggest beds in the sky at 81 inches, while business class has a full flat bed, and economy class a fixed back seat that ensures the passenger in front won't back into your space again. All three classes offer a state-of-the-art entertainment system. A virtual tour of the new cabin is available at [www.cathaypacific.com/experience](http://www.cathaypacific.com/experience).

Cathay was recently named Best First Class airline in the 2008 World Airline Awards™ run by Skytrax. The award recognizes the positive customer reaction to the new First Class cabin design. As they also captured the Best First Class Onboard Catering award.

In its commitment to being "green," Cathay has deployed a fuel-efficient Boeing 777-300ER on its daily non-stop Toronto-Hong Kong route. This aircraft also operates on one of the airline's daily non-stop flights between Vancouver and Hong Kong. Passengers who want to "fly green" can buy carbon offset credits that go toward a wind power plant in China.



## Seamless connections

Star Alliance members are in the midst of moving to London Heathrow's new hubbed Terminal 1 as part of the "Move under one Roof" project. The move of all Star Alliance carriers will be completed by 2012. Terminal 1 is also home to the airline's largest lounge.

First- and business-class passengers and Star Alliance Gold Card holders traveling on any member carrier from Terminal 1 are welcome to use the new lounge. Star Alliance has 29 members at Heathrow, including its newest, Turkish Airlines.

Building one lounge for Star Alliance passengers to share is a major cost saving to airlines, says Lee Blacklip, VP, Products & Services, Star Alliance. "Rather than run separate lounges and incur duplicate construction and operating costs, Star Alliance lounges save the airlines money, and give customers a high quality experience in a comfortable environment that is much larger and with more amenities than the airlines could provide on their own."

The lounge has more than 300 seats in separate first class and business class sections, food service area, two business centers with Wi-Fi access, shower facilities and a children's area.

Now formerly British Midland, Heathrow's second largest airline and a Star Alliance member, is one of the carriers to benefit from the new Terminal 1. It's also a boon to its customers, says Karen Brown, the airline's national manager of sales and marketing. "With British Airways' move to Terminal 5, Terminal 1 is quieter, more spacious and redesigned for a smoother and quicker customer experience." It recently added Africa, Central Asia and the Middle East to its routes. Within 10 years, it has grown from a short-haul airline serving the U.K. and Europe to a truly global airline, where more than half of its flights are medium- and long-haul. In September it launched its first "Dinner for Business" sale to all destinations across its worldwide network.



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USA Awards 2007  
Best Overall Airline  
(18th consecutive year)  
Best Airline for International Travel  
Best Economy Class

**Copac Magazine**  
(Germany)  
Intercontinental Airline  
of the Year 2007  
(18th consecutive year)

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World's Best International  
Route Airline 2006  
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SINGAPORE AIRLINES

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At Terminal 5, British Airways has introduced a dedicated check-in area for business class customers. To make transferring through Terminal 5 even easier and quicker, a fast-track lane has been introduced for ticket presentation and security in the Flight Connections area. The service is available for passengers travelling in First, Club World and Club Europe, as well as Executive Club Gold and Silver Club members. As well, passengers with flights departing from the satellite terminal will be able to go directly to Terminal 5 B after they have passed through ticket presentation and security and enjoy the lounge facilities.

## Singapore Airlines launches Auto Doc Check

Knowing what travel documents are required, especially for itineraries covering several countries, can be a nightmare for check-in agents and, surprisingly, Star Alliance has simplified the task with the first ever online, efficient product—the Auto Doc Check. This product was developed by a joint Star Alliance team of member carriers and recently launched by Singapore Airlines. Other member carriers will offer it to its fliers.

Let's Hack Life. We. Products and Services. Star Alliance, the first example of a Singapore resident travelling to Australia and then to South Africa with a British passport. "Does he need a visa for any part of the journey? With 'state-of-the-art' technology" now evaluating the passenger's travel documents and deciding if the passenger is allowed to travel. Auto Doc Check is taking the guesswork out of that decision by returning a clear and concise "Yes," "No" or "Conditional" response at check-in. An extensive database containing travel rules for every country helps generate travel warnings and pertinent information in an easy-to-understand format.

That is then accessed by a carrier's host system and individually tailored for their passengers. The service is available to passengers checking in via the Internet or at self-service kiosks.

## The right documents

Business travellers entering the United States by land or air should get caught without the proper documents. Beginning June 1, 2009, travellers must present a valid, acceptable document verifying identity and citizenship. This requirement has been in effect for air travellers since January 2007. In addition to a passport, there are several other documents that are acceptable at land and sea ports of entry from U.S. and Canadian citizens coming from Canada, Mexico, Bermuda or the Caribbean. These include the new U.S. Passport Card, air visas/previously issued enhanced driver's licenses, and the three Trusted Traveler Programs (FTR) cards (NEXUS, SENTRI, and FAST).

## Reaping your rewards

- **Flight MileDirect** dates are a thing of the past with the new Starwood Preferred Guest (SPG) flight program. SPG members simply visit [www.SPG.com/flights](http://www.SPG.com/flights) to redeem their Starpoints for their selected flight. Members may even earn airline miles when booking.
- **Staying at a Sheraton hotel?** Get out of your room and work remotely or simply stay connected with the new Link@Sheraton. De-



signed as a social destination, the stylish digital lobby lounge invites guests to interact with each other or simply be with other travellers while they check their email, research local attractions and even print boarding passes using free Wi-Fi. The Link@Sheraton offers computer terminals and Internet access points mirroring Microsoft products. More than 300 Link@ are open at Sheraton around the globe and hundreds more are slated to open by year end, says Cynthia Bond, spokeswoman for Starwood Canada.

- **Aeroplan** is offering up to 30,000 bonus miles when you fly in the new Post an eligible one-stop scheduled flight operated by Air Canada between Canada and many international destinations until December 31. Also earn double Aeroplan miles on your first stay and triple Aeroplan miles on the next four stays at participating Diamond Hotels & Resorts until December 31.
- **Staying at Cambria Suites** hotels in North America and some European destinations will earn you triple rewards with 12 airline partners until December 15. Partners include Aeroplan, Delta SkyMiles, American Airlines Advantame, Continental Cores, United MilePlus, among others. Simply provide your frequent flyer number at check-in. Cambria is a member of Choice Hotels International and membership in the Choice Privileges frequent guest program earns points for hotel, airline, travel and gift card rewards. The program offers access to over 5,500 hotel and resort locations worldwide with no blackout dates.
- **Get Double Priority Club Points or Double Miles** beginning with the second qualifying stay at participating InterContinental® Hotels & Resorts, Crowne Plaza®, Hotel Indigo®, Holiday Inn®, Tapestry by Holiday Inn® and Holiday Inn Express® hotels worldwide until December 15.
- **Hilton Honors** is offering 1,000 on Hilton Honors bonus points for two-night stays in its Italian native European destinations, including Warsaw, Budapest and Prague. Offer is good until December 31.
- **To find the latest reward offers for flights, hotels and holidays**, visit [www.rewardscentral.ca](http://www.rewardscentral.ca). The site has links to online reward programs, hotel programs and credit card programs.

Former, an unattended suitcase, parade around Quebec selling voters was a waste of money to vote for the Bloc, Harper was showing "no respect for democracy."

The Prime Minister joked trapped, trapped and safely happy. There was a getting that week off his feet. But he looked bewildered. Something else happened too. Don't look turning toward the camera, a very artificial behaviour that, thanks to the tight angle of the TV camera shot, gave him an anxious contact with the camera that the others lacked. He spoke in quiet, conversational tones. The others, intent on ganging up on Harper, let him talk. And alone among the leaders, he brought something new: a "10-day plan" for dealing with the economic turbulence. The plan had to be one either it had been the pro-

posed to be one of the most successful of the campaign staff and outside experts for a few days. Frankly, no one would have been looking for credit, because the plan was not a thing of genius. It was basically a plan for negotiations. As prime minister, Don would meet the premiers, some provincial governments, and the heads of the Bank of Canada and other federal agencies, as soon as he could. He'd get out an economic update. He'd spend a name infrastructure spending.

The essence of Don's plan would end up sharply contradicting what he'd said for now at least he had one. Harper had named economic turmoil as a major campaign issue as early as his trip to Ottawa Hill. He had asked the business community to lengthen the economic component of the debate from 12 to 30 minutes. He'd remind all of every crowd he'd met on the road that he was an economist. And he'd shown up in the debate with nothing but very blue eyes of love.

"It's a moment when heads of government around the world are acting to address this crisis. Mr. Harper seemed positive," Radio Canada commentator Michael C. Auer said for the network's viewers later. On at CBC, Jean Lapierre had even more surprising news: Atoning money who had called and written to the network with an opinion, Don was the clear winner.

Thursday came the rematch in English: Outside the National Arts Centre, young Conservatives waved blue candidates' signs, greeted by mobs of young Liberals cheering "Chris Cuzo, Cuzo, Cuzo On On!" Inside, this time, Harper brought an effective game. He



HEART OF THE MATTER: Justin Trudeau (above) and the Tories campaign in Quebec



and his and had spent the morning accepting all in becoming an opening change against them. "What leaders have to do is not a plan and no plan. Last night, Stéphane, you panicked." Canada's economy wasn't the same as the one south of the border, he said, and even worse, doing too badly. What was needed was follow through.

"The economy is not fine," Layton said.

**Harper alone had yet to release a platform. 'Where is it?' Jack Layton asked. 'Under the sweater?'**

back. "Now either you don't care or you're misreading me. Which is it?" He had all the great things, Jack did it Harper, alone among the leaders, Layton selected a platform yet. "Where is it?" Layton asked. "Under the sweater?"

My French had been shaky in English she was pained, low key, confident. Harper was a little less confident in English than in French. Basically the debate was a fore-bell. But when Frank Graves of the polling firm Ekos Research's Associates did a quick survey to check voter perceptions, he found something curious.

When Ekos asked who had won the Big 100 debate, 26 per cent said nobody but 18 per cent said second with 23 per cent. He followed with 33 per cent, Layton with 15. At 30 per cent, Don came down last, except for Doug. When asked who had lost the debate, respondents were 16 to name Harper on Don, at 25 per cent each. This meant only that Harper was a polarizing figure, with fans as well as detractors. With a tie for top loser and a fourth place berth out of five in the winner's circle, Don could not claim to have had a solid night.

But then Ekos asked respondents whether anything they had seen would make them reconsider their vote. Eighteen per cent said yes, a pretty high number. And who were they thinking of voting for? Among the young voters, the highest number—32 per cent—said they were thinking of voting Liberal. Harper's Conservatives had attracted only seven per cent of vote-wishers.

This should not be a revelation, but perhaps it still is. People don't want a debate looking for a good debate. They look for a somebody, among all the good and bad debaters, who might make a good guess against Stéphane Dion was back in the game.



# Home stretch

**EVERY DAY ON** the campaign trail, a Liberal prize-winner would point a camera at Stéphane Dion's face and he would answer a short question again in English and French. It was one of many ways the Liberals were sacrificing effort and attention to the eternal hope, still well-filled today, that the so-called new media would transform elections as radically as television and radio had before.

The day after the English debate Dion was in Montreal. He stood into the camera and made his pitch to the vanishingly small Internet audience. "For a nice Canadian, had a chance to see me in three living rooms and on TV and on the computer that Stephen Harper with his propaganda tried to bring to the people," he said.

And it was true. The question now was what to do about it. The problem was that Dion had a much better plan for the 30 days after the election than he did for the 12 days left before it.

He was in Montreal to address the Board of Trade along with a similar group representing young people in business. He was obviously on a bit of a high, full of obvious sales and literary allusions. "I'm always very when I hear about 'relief,'" he told the young entrepreneurs in French, using the term that means a rising generation. Its literal translation would be "the next shift" or "the ones who take over." "I'm always reminded of what Gilles Vigneault said when ever he heard it: 'What, did somebody fall?'"

But his speech was only maddening and it was delivered with the aid of that old Canadian killer, the teleprompter.

This was the day the U.S. House of Representatives would pass a reworked version of the US\$700-billion bailout package that rejected, in a particularly nasty afternoon of fighting and finger-pointing, four days earlier. Harper was still silent on playing things cool. "We are not going to get into a situation like we have in the United States where we're panicking and screaming in different plain story single." Dion was now laconic. "We need a plan. A plan

made in Canada, not in Australia." Applause, more too cautious, from the business crowd. "One thing that is certain: Stephen Harper is an economic risk. Canadians can no longer afford it," Dion said.

But even in Montreal he had to fend off more than one opponent. He called Layton's plan to cancel \$50 billion in corporate tax cuts, the mechanism by which Layton planned to pay for his entire spending program, "a job killer."

Afterwards, talking to reporters, Dion said it was impossible for voters to vote for a Conservative minority or a Liberal minority. He put forward them to vote Liberal. "You can't vote one third Liberal, two thirds Bloc—a fourth third, like in the play by Pagnol." Justin Trudeau, the party's star candidate in the Popescu riding, smiled at the reference to the French playwright Marcel Pagnol. So did Geoffrey Montpetit, the resident dancer on the leader's tour. But when reporters pressed the leader later about the Bloc, neither had a clue what Dion was talking about.

The worst thing was not the obscure literary references, it was the lack of a big foot-stamping crowd even on the leader's agenda to build visible momentum coming out of the debate. Those provisions had landed him in Quebec in a moment when Quebecers were determined to find themselves wondering whether it was actually time to take heartily, the low-key Montreal appearance had to count as a last opportunity. Dion did sit down to tape some television interviews, including one with Bernard Desnoes, the dean of French language news anchors, that would air after he left Montreal. So he would longer in conversations, as it were, for a few days. But he was still trailing Harper, and he had done precious little to change that here.

By Saturday in Dieppe, N.B., Dion had got the references to Vigneault and Pagnol out of his system. In a room full of supporters in a shopping mall, he seemed anxious to be chatting his party's winning, one working-class hero: Joe Charbon.

He said he wanted Canada "where nobody's rich as in winning," a potent



distillation of the masses' (those on student and he had delivered at Western. He wanted a Canada "where nobody has to sell their house to pay for their education." Harper still didn't have a platform, he complained. "The smile from Australia is alive." He was one of the questions from ordinary voters in the debate had been what each candidate's first action would be on taking office. "Harper

**HOPING FOR A LATE-GAME SURGE:** Asked about his strategy for the final days of the campaign, Dion simply said, "Do what"

very courageously said, I will continue to do nothing." "We don't need a prime minister on a bubble," he said. "We need a prime minister who can play the game." "He's beginning, to find it like the cow that he was," Mason said later, after a brief nap on Prime Minister's Island. The Conservatives had been satisfying the tiny province with

one face Liberal seat for a year—radio ads, letters to every household, visits by half the cabinet. Dion needed to shore up Liberal support. Still playing defence. "He's beginning to pay attention to the simpler issues. When it's getting late." "Well, it is. Absolutely. But it's happening. That's the good

thing. It's happening." Another pertinent question: where was it happening? Mason spoke on a campaign plane that was on its way to Quebec in New Brunswick. After a news conference there and a stop in St. John's, Dion would head south, but not very far, for another news conference and another news conference on the shores of Phil

PHOTOGRAPH BY PHILIP HARRIS



couldn't just be there voting for Harper could feel good. It had to be that voting for them should make people feel uneasy.

Harper set about doing that choice into the most common terms imaginable. Solidarity in Victoria, Harper mentioned the idea of a coalition of opposition parties somehow running the country. "If you get prime minister Dion, either directly or by the opposition parties helping him take power, interest rates are going to go up." (There was rough equivalent of Senator Jim Munton on the Conservative side, it was Senator Macquie LeBreton. (The same suggestion would have elicited nervous chuckles from both of them.) She had been sent to appear chamber heaven by Dion.

## Greens were furious at May's anybody-but-Harper shtick. 'The inference is: don't bother voting Green.'

the moral rule in the Conservative was never was that nobody was supposed to talk about their poll advantage. That discipline would come in handy one day, when it was tight enough.

"I worry about our passenger workers," LeBreton said. "I keep telling them we are going to win this election. People are not going to vote for Stéphane Dion and a rate I know that I went through Joe Clark and the 18-cent garnish I went through [Robert] Stanfield and wage and price controls."

BY NOW every campaign—even, belatedly, Dion's—was in a horse-stretch beauty. All except Elizabeth May's. She had closed, long ago, out of all the ridings in Canada where

not a body thing to watch.

Recall that the moral dilemma facing any third-party supporter is whether to stick with that third party or to ditch it for a second party that might stop the first party from winning. In 2004 Paul Martin had managed to hang on to a enough NDP votes to win a narrow victory. In 2006 he lost them, and power. LeBreton had essentially convinced voters the Liberals weren't worth saving. But May had been playing footsie with Dion for more than a year. He had been a candidate of consolation whose sole purpose in 2006 was to save people out of voting votes that couldn't stop Harper. And now she was abandoning all over the map.

"I won't say, 'Go vote to vote Green if

and strategic voting makes no sense in most places, but that there were ridings where websites would help people decide how best to beat the Conservatives. This article qualified whether just a release saying May did not mean what she had said.

Was she kidding? No. On Oct. 12 May told the Canadian Press there was "no question" that a 20 per cent of Canadian ridings, Green voters may want to vote strategically. Out pops a new Green press release. This was becoming "irresponsible," the release said, putting a subtextual bar on Green voters that they were the opposite of the one May had said when she was speaking but even round.

Tenants? Other Greens had stronger terms for it, and it wasn't the press they were mad

wasn't just a game. They couldn't think of anyone else in history, additionally, a party leader had anything other than ask for complete support for three candidates. The only time you don't is when you decide to pull a candidate when they commit some kind of egregious mistake. But that's completely different.

Chernomirsky said Green party members had been talking to some feeling "a bit disappointed and let down. The leader has only one job above all—and that is to support every one of your candidates in every one of your ridings."

The most damaging thing about May's shtick was that Harper stuck with the Green backlash of support from the conservative right, Chernomirsky said. And they were looking unworried. "I can tell you from my own eyes I'm getting directly from all of the people who come over from the Conservative party saying, 'Hey you know what? We don't think Stephen Harper is the Green ticket, but we were attracted to the Green party. But now you're effectively demanding us or even for getting we want in the risk to anyone but a Conservative.' That's then all of these former New Democrats and Liberals saying, 'Maybe I do have to play my nose again and go back. I was starting to see the Green party as a viable option. But even the leader doesn't think the party has legitimately a job to do as a political party as opposed to a protest movement, then what am I doing here?'"

In one of her later strings in damage control, May listed a few ridings where she thought the Green candidate had an excellent shot at victory. Chernomirsky told that amounted to playing favorites—and it could literally kill the party. "Whether it's explicit or implicit, the inference from that is in all of the other [ridings], don't bother voting Green. Vote for that non-dominant party that will defeat the Conservatives. That is the killer. It's the killer for motivation, psychology. It's completely demoralizing for anyone who is a candidate, a voter, a volunteer. And not only that, it will wipe out the Green party financially because... since party financing rules allow money for every vote received... the Green party needs every one of those votes."

But as the campaign head on into its final weeks, Green supporters seemed to find more for themselves elsewhere. Polls put the party's support up to the 20 per cent or 30 per cent range. Not enough to elect any Green MPs, perhaps. But enough to constitute a serious drag on Liberal and NDP support.

WELL, THEN, Jack Layton would simply tell his party to support up with his hands. He had to. On Sunday, 400 people, mostly



Malrueny, and in the 2002 when she was advising Joe Clark, she used to send reporters long emails explaining why the country would be on his terrible of the new Canadian Alliance leader, Stephen Harper, ever took over. But then her party merged with his. "I'm a dissonant," she shrugged to anyone who would listen, and she rolled up her sleeves to work for the new boss. She was an inviolable asset: well acquainted with the Progressive Conservative wing of the party he knew best, level-headed, charming in a way he would never be.

"Unlike the last election campaign when we took a dip right at the end, this time a little dip at the beginning of the last week, I actually see that as a blessing in disguise," she said in

Scarlett, Ont., on Oct. 10, four days from the vote. "It focused the minds of our people. I think it caused voters to focus. It gave us a chance to tighten our message. It's getting back to, 'Who do you trust to lead the country through difficult economic times?'"

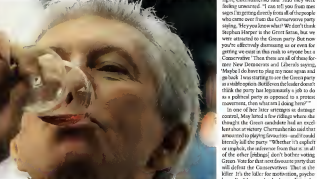
She had no interest in any efforts to make Harper look more respectable. "He's a strong leader and a private person. We don't owe anyone an explanation that he doesn't get out there and bag everybody."

Early in the campaign, internal Conservative polls suggested the race was much closer than the public polls were saying. (Which is kind of funny, because early in the campaign, internal Liberal polls suggested the Conservatives were winning it as a walk.) At any rate,

she could stick to be the first MP elected as a Green candidate, to run in Central Nova, not far from her Cape Breton roots. Her target was Peter MacKay, the last leader of the Progressive Conservative party, the defence minister in the Harper government. May wanted to be a giant killer. But the reason people respected David and Colville, all those thousands of years later, is that David had better luck than anyone else left behind really do.

With a week to go in the campaign, May's staff told her she was solidly on track to lose Central Nova by a spectacular margin. The only thing to do was to go home and tell the soldier all she was worth. As a bonus, it might get her out of the national headliner.

Elizabeth May was Thinking Twice. It was



A TOAST TO SPOILERS: Swagge celebrated Tories in Quebec, May castigated the Greens

you believe in our policies." She was quoted as saying in the Toronto Star on Oct. 25. "I'll say, 'Here's our policies, figure out what you need to do because, frankly, the Green party has to get programs and principles above short-term power.'" Just as one this was unclear, she added, "I will not be able to live with myself if anything I've done contributes to Harper winning, because the stakes are too high."

The publication of that article led to an immediate "clarification" from the Green party, denying the plain meaning of its leader's words. No, the Greens did not endorse strategic voting. Horrors.

This would soon become a bit of a trend in an interview with the Globe and Mail, May

of "She's making it very confusing," Simon North Green candidate Valerie Russell told reporters. "If the Liberals get in, they won't remain the left, they'll have power."

David Chernomirsky ran against May in 2006 for the Green leadership. This question of whether Greens should vote Green even if it might not stop another party had been at the centre of their dispute. He had been quiet about her leadership style ever since. But at the very end of the campaign, he made it clear to Martin's that he was furious with her for muddying the waters.

"It is unprecedented," he said. "I sit in a room surrounded by representatives of all parties for election night analysis. And they

young, packed Club Soda in Montreal for an NDP rally. Nothing like this would have been possible anywhere in Quebec for the NDP a few years ago. "My friends, I'm Jack Layton and I'm running for prime minister," he told the roaring crowd. "Can we stop finger with the idea? Can Dion get the job done?" These were not hard questions for such a crowd. "NO!"

"No had a dream of Building a New Democratic movement in Quebec for a very long time," he told supporters. "The *Sundowner* is here."

Latter, Brad Langlois said the party had real hopes in four ridings. Outcomes: Jeanne Le Ber, Westmount-Ville Marie and Grosse Pointe. The party had put 81 million into television ads in Quebec alone, more than ever before, most of it in Montreal and the Outremont. Mileau won Grosse Pointe in a by-election and looked pretty good to hold it. Jeanne Le Ber and Gati were believed to be the Bloc Westerner/Westerners was a Liberal strong hold.

The Liberals, Langlois said, were "excited to watch their worst showing ever"—35 per cent of the national popular vote. "The Liberal vote is collapsing. It's not a feature of the left, it's a feature of the Liberal party."

Surely, supporters cried Layton, he would fall short in the stretch? "I always finish my speeches by saying, 'Don't let them tell you it can't be done.'"

Dion's heroic stretch campaign was hardly less frantic. Instead of ending his sights squarely, he had to worry about the political damage. The thing that had tripped him up was his own vaunted 10-day reelection plan. In Halifax, Dion made what is nearly an obligatory call for campaigning leaders who were to reach a wide Atlantic audience: the studio of votes an NDP supporter knew anchor Steve Murphy. The interview was pre-arranged, as most of these things are. After a long preamble in his booming baritone, Murphy cut to the chase. "If you were prime minister now, what would you have done about the economy and the crisis that Mr. Harper has done?"

Overseer (crisis) with a strong streak will be making that scenario to his advantage for years to come. And yet what was so new in the footage to some was that Dion understood the question so soon as he heard it. "It would have been the prime minister 20 years ago," he answered, quizzically. "If you were the prime minister now," Mr.

play stall, "and had been for the past two years."

But Dion had already jumped in. "If I'm elected next Tuesday, this Tuesday? Now he was in trouble, because he was on what's sometimes called "message track." In Quebec it's called "la cassette." Flag it in and push play. "I would start the 10-50 plan that we want to start the measure we have a Liberal government."

More trouble. The showy start had netted the Liberal. His intent to say his 10-50 plan. The 10-50 plan was his anti-poverty agenda. Dion tried to correct himself, then thought better. "Can we start again?"

This happens in television. Often it's because an anchor isn't as reflexive as he'd

hoped. Sometimes the guest is just off by word with words. Anyway, Dion and Murphy restarted. Murphy asked the question again. Dion still didn't know where to take himself in time and space, there was giggling, and it all went downhill from there. Now here's the thing. Murphy had agreed

that winning the overwhelming majority was at least as interesting as the grammatical niceties of the future subjunctive might have been with a half-pipe. The upshot was that Dion was on TV looking like a goof on the very same he had banned Mr. Harper on the week. "Isn't this great?" A Conservative war-crowd staffer told Mark Lee at the moment the news broke. "It's so great on so many levels."

Harper turned cocaine for the first time in the campaign, he gave reporters their second scream in a day, right after the footage aired on Duffy, uniquely to comment on his opponent's discomfiture. Who would you wish didn't have a plan now?

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time in days, his staff disbanded the rest of his seminar. "This election has made it very clear," he said. "I have a great team. Stephen Harper has no team." Harper had built his campaign on a lie. He must lose on this lie. There is no party with bigger (as out) for Canadian news than the Liberal party.

As for the NDP, "the only job a vote for Jack Layton will save a Stephen Harper's job. That's the way the world works."

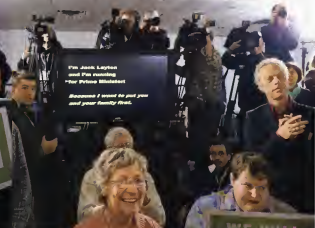
He was calling voters home to the Liberals. But Dion was an academic for years before he entered politics. He would have been very familiar, as a goof at the University of Montreal, with the look of what he was doing. He had begun hard work—the work of delivering a message, finding words that worked, identifying goals, he'd been bitten, speaking with passion, the very real bit of the politician's craft, the basic survival work so fundamental to any politician's campaign adventure—lies. And like any student who starts answering questions close to the final exam, he was getting frantic.

"A vote for Jack Layton won't stop Stephen Harper. It will mean fewer members of Parliament able to make a real difference for their constituencies. A vote for Jack Layton won't stop Stephen Harper. It will mean a Prime Minister who thinks that going to war in Iraq was the right thing to do. A vote for Jack Layton won't stop Stephen Harper."

There were two days left. On TV across the country, whether they were tuned to ECTV or the Food Network or maybe some other channel, ads appeared showing a young mother in a park in what was, frankly, her gorgeous, sprawling new kitchen. She looked worried. She picked up the paper "Markets Unleashed," the headline read, over paragraphs suggesting something a lot worse than uttering. The mother put a protective hand on her daughter's shoulder—there were no males in this house, only infant images from the TV buying in the center of the national kitchen. Why, then, was Stephen Dion? The mother looked on. "The women are the ones who are off their best jobs—Harper, Dion, Layton, Duggan, May—men printing lies to themselves."

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PARTY MACHINERY: Tory supporters in Quebec infuse thunder rocks while the NDP faithful in Vancouver crank it up for a rally

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## What's been settled, for now

**THAT FIRST WEEKEND** four after the leadership debates didn't wind up doing the candidates Dineen voted much good. North (Billings) lost to Peter Howard (Island) and Ker Egan-Loss (Maritime), Tim Harper in Charlottetown, Kristy Brown and Anne Friel in Shannon in N.C. Brian Murphy hung on in Meccatone (New Brunswick), Marc Gosselin in downtown Montreal, Anthony Bets in northern Ontario, Keith Martin on Vancouver Island. You win some, you lose some. "Some days take less, but most days take more," a singer named Bone, much liked by Dineen's predecessor Paul Martin, used to sing. "Some slip through your fingers and into the floor."

In Ontario, where he had focused in the house streets, 36 seats won in 2006 slipped through Dineen's fingers and into the Conservative and NDP caucuses. Twenty-seven, as compared to the 2006 returns, were lost by the Liberals from coast to coast. The Liberal party won a smaller share of the vote than it ever had in modern times. One consolation prize, not a slice one with 24 per cent of the popular vote and 13 seats, the Liberals performed better under Dineen than before previous than under Martin in 2006. It was not a complete rejection. It was not the most personal rejection possible.

It was pretty bad. As Dineen and his family made their way into the big room so he could make his very sad concession speech, his wife, Joanne Krisher, and daughter, Jessie, smiled heavily despite obvious sadness. CTV reporter Roger Smith, one of the network's quiet professionals, did his best to carry out an ancient and tedious assignment trying to get a comment from the leader before the leader could address the nation. An RCMP officer guarding Dineen body checked Smith pretty hard, and when the reporter came back for more, Dineen himself sounded on him. "The last one I want to speak to first is

CTV," he snapped, and the next sentence slipped with tension and multiple meanings. "You understand that?"

The obvious question was how quickly the Liberals should withdraw the banners from on that they were divided. Michael Ignatieff said the party in mind "reflected" on its leadership. That earned him a rebuke from Dineen's closest supporter who had been very close, in 2006 and 2007, to return to his default mode, loyalty to the leader in place. "I think Michael Ignatieff, unfortunately, made a mistake tonight," Dineen told Radio Canada. "This is not the night to be in leader mode."

In a lot of places across the country, finding the cutlery was probably a prudent policy. Ignatieff's May lost because of vote-splitting, simple in that. If the NDP vote had gone her way she'd have won. But of course the NDP vote wouldn't go her way because Jack Layton's entire life was as leader of that party has been about his party's right to exist and thrive, whatever happens to other parties. Map sought, with more goodwill than agility, to find a more conciliatory path. The way this philosophy ring the death knell for him will sharpen the inevitable and healthy debate about how small political parties should work to advance their programs. Layton becomes the first New Democratic leader since Tommy Douglas to grow his

seat count in each of three successive elections. The NDP didn't split a seat in any province in the nation. They picked up seats in crazy places, crazy places for the federal New Democrats, Newfoundland, Alberta. But Layton had set his sights almost comically high, and like Ben Obvious he didn't come anywhere close to making it across the Chawath. The mood at Layton's election night party, at the Government nightclub in Toronto, was somber. The party hadn't broken Ed Broadbent's all-time record seat count. The million-dollar ad buy in Quebec had allowed Mulcair to keep his seat but accomplished no more. The three other Quebec ridings

**Should the Liberals unsheath the knives? Even on that they were divided.**

ELECTION night in Montreal: Dineen with his wife, Joanne Krisher, and daughter, Jessie.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROGER LORRYNE

Laupre had overdone women's even closer.

"My mentor is Jack Layton and I ran for prime minister to get ordinary families first," he said in French. He stayed a few more lines from his stump speech, switching from present to past tense as he went, reminding a lot along the way. It had been a tricky campaign for verb cases.

Every leader of the Bloc Québécois has said the party must not become a permanent fixture in the Parliament of a country the Bloc wants to leave. It is becoming a long time since Duceppe said it. It must be assumed that this year he would vote for young voters who were not even alive when he was first elected to Parliament in August 2000. The Bloc is becoming the James Bond of Canadian politics. Every few years, leaders from the rest of Canada level a bomb and gaged over the dark pool, wait their moment, after opaque national elections, and then head for the exit. And every election, a name on Duceppe has resulted a closer to his watch



## Stephen Harper has never been handed anything he has won

turned." In this future Canada, "criminals are spending more money on elections in prison, and there is no organizational strong, united Conservative party, a divided, discredited, possibly bankrupt Liberal party, and a resurgent NDP."

Pretty good show, all things considered. And to what end? More soul-crushing from another man named Harper, since, this time only, he's just a friend. "Most people would have said, 'Wow the hell could a guy like Harper even last 24 years?' I would argue he made two or three substantial changes to Canadian politics: the child-still-benefits-for-parents-of-each-child-and-their-children's military staff and the cutting of the GST, raising a huge swath of revenue from the federal government. Those are big important things that Canadians have dreamed about doing. And he's done them without—not that anyone thinks he's not Conservative, but he's done them in an unconventional way. But these are substantial accomplishments."

Harper has never been handed anything he has won. Seven years ago, when Dion already

had the clarity Anzorcia had had him, Harper was an ex-MP eyeing the leadership of an unaffiliated Canadian Alliance. He had to get past Stockwell Day and Joe Clark and Peter MacKay and Barbara Schreiner before he even got a shot at Paul Martin. Every time you could find someone to say he couldn't win it. He fell short of a majority this year. Never having had a majority, he is not sure what he's supposed to be missing.

The Liberals have yet to decide how much division and bankruptcy they want to survive up to the waiting Conservatives. Dion will always wonder, in his skull, what he could have accomplished if he had not spent two years telling experienced politicians their advice was to go to him. The economy will be tougher than at any point since before Jean Chrétien became prime minister. Some of his media are wasting this. This is a warning, a slowly dawning that it's not much that it needed one thing.

Stephen Harper is still in charge. ■

With John Golder, Aaron Perry, Nicholas Koller, Martin Perreault, Colin Campbell, Nancy Macdonald, Anne Kingston, Steve Mach, Rachel Woodson and Susan Holmwood

ON THE WEB: A comprehensive photo gallery from behind the scenes of a divisive election at [www.macleans.ca/election06/](http://www.macleans.ca/election06/). And for more 2006 vote news and analysis visit [www.macleans.ca/canada/election](http://www.macleans.ca/canada/election)

# What if they gave an election and nobody won?

We now know one thing: this electoral system is broken



ANDREW COYNE

On Friday, Aug. 25, as the Conservatives were putting the finishing touches on an election plan, the S&P/TSX composite index closed at 13,771—down from its record earlier in the year, but still a historically high level, and rising. A week later, just before the election call, it was down 555 points. Four days later, another 670.

Well, for all the tremors on the markets, the gathering crisis in global finance remained for many Canadians a distant thunder—booming, but not yet imminent for a cold-war panic. For all the much-market's gyrations over the few weeks of the campaign, the trend was unclear, and Conservative support held relatively firm. Through the end of the campaign third week, the Tories maintained a healthy to point lead over the second place Liberals.

And then everything went to hell. The economy was not just the most important issue of this election. It was the only issue. It wasn't economic, as such, nobody really had much to offer in the way of significant policy differences. It was more like a cultural disaster. It was like holding an election in the middle of a hurricane. Nobody much wants to know what year policy is or how time goes. They just want to know how well you'll stand up to it. They just want to know if you can get them in to port.

All elections are about leadership, to a greater or lesser extent. This one became, as few elections are, a test of leadership under



FIVE WEEKS of campaigning, \$300 million, and the lowest voter turnout ever

fire, played out in real time. Surprisingly, this did not automatically rebound to Stephen Harper's benefit.

In the early part of the campaign, the Conservatives had some reason to hope that a defensive move over the economy would work to their advantage: that reality as-the-guess would be an appealing message, that Harper's image as a "strong leader" would attract undecided voters to his side. But when the storm clouds moved into a deluge, it became clear that the "strong leader" image was built on sand. Harper had just spent four weeks up on Stephen Dion, he'd shown a medical mystery of the House of Commons, he'd blab-

bered and belabored virtually anyone he'd come into contact with. Politics engaged the patient part of our brain, and Harper's appeal was that of the loud wolf, "and in such and such" for which it seemed to be the end. All those broken promises, all those abandoned convictions, all these jaw-dropping about faces—they'd won him the element of tactical surprise over his opponents, but at the cost of any relationship of trust with the broader public.

It turns out that metrics. Why back at the start of the campaign, it was commonly framed as a contest between strength (Harper's preferred "tall tale question") and trust

[Dion's] presumed comparative advantage. Apparently strength depends on trust. When the crisis broke, Harper was at first unable to call upon those reservoirs of trust a leader needs if he is to, well, lead. A leader whose appeal was based on always being in control was probably valuable when it became clear he wasn't in control—out of the mar- lets, out of the televised debates, faced with crucial decisions for the very week of maximum turmoil, where a blinking Harper was subjected to a non-stop, four-party barrage of abuse: you don't care (you trust), you're not sure (hardly not), you have no platform (you got that right).

It must have been bewildering to Harper in policy terms, he was absolutely right: the Canadian economy was badly as it had equal as the American, nor were the sorts of remedies being employed there in order how. We were bound to be affected by the crisis in American finance and there were sure to be hard times ahead, but in the short term there wouldn't be any Canadian government in a bad do about, and even less that any party leader was seriously proposing. Yet for a week or so days after the markets collapsed, no one was listening. Or not enough people were listening. Or not the right people, the undecided, the swing voters, the voters in parts of the country Harper needed to reach if he was to achieve the majority he sought.

What happened, in that first flash of job he panic, was that everybody assumed to their zones. Pollsters from Harris/Dominion tell the story. Of those who said the economy was the issue that would decide their vote—and there were many more of those midway through the campaign than at the start—a disproportionate share broke: Tory, from Manitoba west, while from Ontario east, they said disapproval in the vote. Lib and. The regional and partisan split correlated closely with people's views of the nature of the threat to the economy. Those who saw the threat as more general terms were inclined to look for a steady-handed fixerlike [Harper] style—and most of them were to be found in the prosperous West; those who saw threat in more personal terms—any job, any future—looked for someone who could abolish them. And to be born the brief Dion booster, in those parts of the country where people are more inclined to use the government to their protection. He may have been slow to recognize how complex the economy had come to dominate public concern—and the epidemic, say, of climate change—but he was quicker than the others.

It didn't last. In the end, Harper was able to pull out a surprisingly strong win—at least compared to where he had been with a week to go—maintaining his party's numbers in



A MAJORITY IN THE MAKING? OR IS THIS AS FAR AS THE Conservatives will ever get?

Atlantic Canada and Quebec while gaining seats in Ontario and the West. Across the country, the Conservative vote was about five percentage points higher than the polls had predicted. It may have been surprise Conservative organization, a more-motivated base, a late wave of good news from the mar- jors. But it seemed also that Harper found his feet in the last week.

Oddly, things had to get worse in the final six days before they could get better for Harper. Measures that he would have been justified in expecting earlier in the crisis, such as the \$25-billion government shift of bad mortgages off the back's books, by the last week of the campaign had become entirely justified, given the alternatives, even to the most cautious free marketeer. Just in the prospect of a global financial implosion, global

financial world leaders to advise, so it freed Harper to take about a quarter of that, whatever to enact in policy, was political poison. By the last weekend of the campaign, Harper was promising to "protect" the economy with something opposing position, and some thing very a rare conviction.

**BUT LET US NOT** lose sight of big picture. The Conservatives entered this campaign with a real shot at a majority—perhaps their best shot, perhaps their last shot. This is not a victory for the Tories, except in the most literal sense. It may not have harmed our catastrophe it looked to be at one point. But the Conservatives can hardly be congratulating themselves. In particular, the ups fall as their Quebec campaign—they finished third, behind the Liberals—must be disappointing a

## If we must have five-party politics, let us at least have parties with national appeal, and real differences

party that had oversteered itself, and a good share of the communitarian, that it was the author of the federal vote in Quebec, that it might even knock off the Bloc.

That is a misstatement, not just of the particular tactics of this campaign, but of the whole strategic vision of the party's "progressivism." They have led the political forces they were elected, yet they have been chasing all the way—changing the middle, chasing Quebec—to see their quarters made over further from their grasp. All that looking about, all

their attempts to denude themselves of anything resembling an ideology, has not produced a more conservative public have been more liberal. The effect of their efforts to woo Quebec into the Conservative fold still less to make them more Canadian, it has only persuaded them to withdraw still further from nation of life, to consider Canada as little more than a study area of clubs and forests. Think of all that the Conservatives have thrown at Quebec: billions of dollars in the name of the

financial "fiscal imbalance." The status of union. A power grab in foreign affairs. And it all falls to pieces over a few policy cuts in area funding?

But then, it's hard to see the result as a victory for anyone. The Liberals, at less than 37 per cent, have kepted home with the worst popular vote showing in their history, giving up some quarters of their seat. If Liberals think that is merely a problem of leadership, a simple matter of going down the old horse and running off with that dreamy Michael Ignatieff—well, that's too bad—they should think again. This is the third election in a row that the Liberals have won their popular vote drop. Indeed, they have been operating with a narrower and narrower electoral base, not just of late, but for the past five decades. While you don't forget about friendly discrimination and "gritlike," the Big Red Machine has been dragging one wheel after another. They lost the Winston Churchill leadership, and have never recovered. (Across the West, the Liberals won just seven seats this election. Seven seats.) They lost Quebec in the history sweep, and have never recovered. And now they're lost Ontario. They have become, for all intents and purposes, the Montreal-Toronto party, with pockets in Atlantic Canada.

But why pick on the Liberals? The NDP, for all the impression of momentum it gave off during the campaign, finished in no higher in the popular vote than it was last time, and as close to its professed goal of becoming the Liberals as the government is to winning. The Bloc held on to more of its seats, but only with a large boost from Conservative mistakes—and its popular vote share declined. Even the Greens, the first party to significantly increase its vote, fell short of expectations—and elected no one. Is it possible for everyone to lose an election?

And the biggest losers? The public. Five weeks of campaigning and 370 million in public funds later, the parties finished within a percentage point or so of where they were at the start. It's almost as if the election never happened—and might as well not have, for all the public read. All those polls, all those ads, all that news coverage, and the turnout at this election, it appears, will be the lowest ever, just 55 per cent of registered voters. At some point it will occur to someone: we have a democratic crisis on our hands—a crisis of legitimacy, a crisis of efficacy. We are stuck, spinning our wheels, unable to find a sense of direction. The prospect is for more hung parliaments, more tedious elections, more still and do it, and less and less public interest.

If this election proves anything, it is that the process by which we elect our government is broken. We are trying to run five-



party policies through a system that was designed for two parties. The Conservatives look at their steady, incremental progress, slowly spending our mind, election after election, from their Alberta-British Columbia base, through Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and now Ontario, and see a majority in the making. But the other way to look at it is that this is as close as they're likely to get.

It has become almost structurally impossible to form a majority government in this country. If you start an election at 40 per cent, we're condemned to do, with 40 seats off the table—the Bloc's gift to Canadian democracy—that it's not 50 per cent of the seats you need to win a majority, it's 60 per cent, 151 of 298. Add to that the growing, institutionalized fragmentation on the left, and the mathematics become almost insurmountable. Eighty years ago, the NDP and the Greens took less than 10 per cent of the vote between them. Today, it is 25 per cent. Throw in the Bloc, and the two parties with any chance of forming a government, the Liberals and Conservatives, are working with just one-third of the vote between them.

## A leadership problem? It's the third election in a row Liberal numbers have dropped.

In a two-party system, majorities can be won with very little intra-party friction. And secondly, in the theoretical limit, just one vote. A generation ago, when the two main parties were more dominant than today, you could win a majority with a margin of as little as one point, say 44 to 45. But the more parties there are, and the more the vote is distributed among them, the more the leading party must rely on the accident of split votes to engineer a majority—creating the larger the gap it must open up between itself and the second-place party. This explains some

IT'S HARD TO SEE the result of this election as a victory for anyone, not the Tories, not the Liberals, certainly not the public.

of the Tories' heavy reliance on negative ads. It wasn't enough for them to raise their own vote. They had to suppress the Liberals' vote, to somewhere close to the NDP's, unless any chance of a majority. As it was, they wound up with us in a pretty gap, and still fell short.

**THREE IS NOTHING** voting with minority governments, per se. It depends what kind of majority. Do we want the kinds of minority Parliaments we have had in recent years, a clutch of lobbied regional or quasi-regional parties, fingers perpetually on the button, endlessly demanding to pitch us all into another godless election in the vain hope that, if the wrong voters can be distracted in these directions, if the right can get their way, if they can daunt and belittle their opponents enough, if they can degenerate towards even further than before, they might just slide their way into a majority? Or will we accept that, whatever the ancient glories of the two-party system, it no longer exists?

If we must have five-party politics, let them at least be parties with real differences, and national appeal. Away with the system that guarantees the Bloc two-thirds of the seats in Quebec on the strength of little more than one-third of the vote. Away with the glories of Conservative Alberta, or Liberal Toronto, where it is scarcely worth campaigning, so predictable are the results. Away with "strategic voting," and other attempts to tell people they may not vote for the party they support, but must vote against the party they fear. Away with the degraded situation of party winning almost a million votes, as the Greens did this time out, and getting zero seats.

Indeed, when you think about it, many of the problems identified in this piece have their origins in the perverse incentives of our highly leveraged, winner-take-all electoral system. Why have the Tories degenerated inwardly? Because they face no competition on the right, extremist style uprisings being more or less outlawed for fear of "splitting the vote." Why did the Liberals ignore their growing weakness all these years? Because they could still count on the massive defections of first post the post to reap a handful of seats from one region or another. Why has the Bloc become an immovable blot on the national scene, long after its original purpose was exhausted? Ditto. Why have majority governments become next to impossible? Why has politics degenerated into such vicious, empty partisanship? Why do so many people no longer bother to vote? Because the system is broken, and if that doesn't manage to persuade us to change it, nothing will. ■

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# MITCHEL RAPHAEL ON WHY LAUREN HAD TO COLD RICK MERCER, WHAT MICHAEL IGNATIEFF LEARNED FROM SARAH PALIN, AND WHAT JUSTIN FOUND OUT ABOUT HIS DAD, PIERRE TRUDEAU, ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

## HOW PIERRE TRUDEAU SAVED SHAWARMA

This election, Justin Trudeau's campaign office was well supplied with cookies baked by his mother, Margaret Trudeau. "Just in case you are wondering what the cookies hint are, she puns like Kingpin," noted Trudeau. The Liberal star focused every aspect of the campaign on eating. "I was really involved in trying to find the right office," he said. "I was asking, 'Where do I get to sit?' And [my assistant] Alex looked at me and said, 'You are not going to spend any time in this office.' I was extremely lucky to have a campaign team that didn't listen to any of my advice on the organizational side." As he went down to dinner, Trudeau was bombarded with stories about his father, Pierre Trudeau. One of the stories surprised him. It was one he had never heard: that Trudeau, "I was meeting with the Lebanese community and this fellow said, 'Boris, there are thousands of restaurants in Montreal because of your father.'" Trudeau said the man had wanted to open a shawarma place in 1976 and the city blocked him so he appealed to the PM's office. "And apparently they'd said yes to it," Trudeau said, "and then I have traveled, it's great. Let them try it in one place and if it works, it works. If it doesn't we'll shut it down." So he called the mayor's office and said they were a chance. "Trudeau's friend in shawarma place in Montreal is famous, the same place his father loved."

## THE HARPERS' VERY DUSTY HOUSE

The Harper kids got exposed to some really stuff in the course of their election. Ben Harper and Rachel Harper told their mother, Laureen Harper, that they were vegetarians or, otherwise, they said Rick Mercer was eating outside

Later, when the host of *The Rick Mercer Report* was choosing a segment with the Harpers on their campaign plans, Mrs. Harper joked, "Why are you being so afraid of this guy? Rick Mercer was not the only bad behaviour they showed during the campaign. The Harper kids watched the French debate and cried that when the leaders were asked to say something nice about the person on their left no one other than their dad said anything but without adding an obscenity. Mrs. Harper says her kids started being sarcastic with their compliments and pretending to be nice to others as a joke after that. During the campaign his Harper and his husband were able to make it back to their Calgary home just once—and boy, was it a date! When Capital Diary asked why a dinner wasn't more in ahead of their arrival, the dad, that in Calgary's booming job market dining services are hard to come by.

**SENIOR TELLS IGNATIEFF: YOU LOOK BETTER ON TV** Michael Ignatieff knocked on a lot of doors during the campaign. One encounter really stood out, he says. "In someone's residence, when a lady opened the door, she looked me up and down for a very long time and said, 'You look better on television.'" When it came to preparing physically for the campaign, he noted, "I do some sort of aerobics and stretches that are politely called yoga but probably don't qualify as yoga at all. I try and get lots of sleep. I can do 12 hours of this, then I have to stop. Politely to reach more like major league sports than almost anything that. It's all about perseverance. I have a good of heavy workouts so my competing shoes."



JUSTIN TRUDEAU (top left) campaigning in Montreal; Michael Ignatieff (top right); Rick Mercer (middle); Laureen and Stephen Harper (bottom left); Michael Ignatieff (bottom right) at the shooting range (left); Rick Mercer (right); Sarah Palin

As deputy leader of the Liberal party, Ignatieff fired any criticism with vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin, Capital Diary wondered. After hearing his laughter, Ignatieff confessed that "the thing I have been taught by Sarah Palin is that when I heard she was chosen by John McCain I thought, there goes the election for the Republicans because it wasn't a serious choice. In other words I didn't understand about politics. She turned down to be for

the Republicans, a very inspired, successful choice. So you live and learn. I disagree with every single thing she said, but I think she is a girl with some of the best—she's a communication."

## THE NP BRIDE AND HER CROSSBOW

When Ontario Tory MP Melissa Georgis needed to relax during the campaign she grabbed her crossbow and hit the range at the Wolf's Den near ridings with

her father, Karen Georgis (an excellent hunter who once killed two caribou with one bullet). There are fake animals, including deer and even a moose, on the trail for crossbow shooting. The MP, who is engaged to be with Gary Ralston, a lawyer, is getting a bit angry about their wedding dress now for over a year—so long's starting to feel old. She's thinking she needs to get a

new one. The first dress was a simple one she got on sale. Now she's considering something a bit fancy. Religion will play a big role in the wedding. Her father is an Asperman Christian and the family recently found out that her mother, Linda Georgis, is Jewish (Georgis' maternal grandfather passed away when her mother was young). Just as an Israeli Muslim, which means Georgis may be wearing a kippah for one of the ceremonies.

## BUT I'M IN THE CARENTH

The Conservative fundraising machine was after every possible supporter this election. Down New Orleans got a call. When she told the caller, "You know I am not a Conservative," the reply was "Yes." The fundraiser referred to her as Minister Oda when she picked up Oda when she called them just back to the script and told her Stephen Harper needed her support and explained why she should donate to the Conservative party. Oda knows how to offer support. She was a cheerleader for the high school football team. But she is not fond of being in front of the camera. It was never her thing. When she worked at CityLife in Toronto—despite, TV legend Maura Zauderer said she could host a show on soap opera politics. She preferred to keep working behind the camera and that habit showed as well to someone named Jonnie Baker.

## YOU CAN'T WEAR THOSE OBAMA T-SHIRTS HERE

Most of the so-called leaders' allies this election were simply political in-laws. As one of the NDP's unpaid events in Toronto, at which former NDP leader Bob Broadbent was a speaker, it was announced that only the

two pre-printed signs the party had provided could be held up "Strong leader" and "Jobs and Pension First." That morning in the worst city, the Conservatives had their rally for Stephen Harper. Chris McCheskey of the Manning Centre for Building Democracy and Stephen Taylor of *Maclean's* were told a was not a good idea to wear Barack Obama shirts that spelled "Barack Obama." Instead of saying "Hope," the sign said "Nope."

under. Don't face. A rally official said people just wouldn't get it.

## WAS THIS ELECTION LEGAL?

Montreal Liberal MP Lewis Coder says he is reading about joining the election lawsuit launched by the group Demosay Which. The group has asked the Federal Court of Canada to declare the election illegal based on the final election date law brought only the Conservatives. Coder says the courts will likely find "no remedy for the breach" of the law. That means it's unlikely the courts will cancel the results where the case finally gets heard. But the legal scholar and former justice minister is keen on getting a decision from the courts so no future prime ministers can call an election during a minority Parliament unless they lose the confidence of the House, which, he says, was the intent of the law.

## WHY DON'T WE GO TO THE UNDERGROUND

Stephanie Tice's wife, Janine Knicker, was the best part of campaigning this election was being in the tunnels on secondary campuses. Sarah said her husband was a politician and love meeting women. The tunnels were high-traffic areas, she said, where she could interact with many students in short amount of time.

## MATHALIA

### FINDLAY GETS LUCKY

Toronto Liberal MP Mathias Findlay says his official campaign office barman Lucy Lager "kicked" she said. "Plus when you bring in to the office you get to see, 'Hey, get lucky!'"

ON THE NEWS: For more Ottawa updates or to contact Michael Buckley, visit [michael.buckley.ca](http://michael.buckley.ca) or [michael@capitaldiary.com](mailto:michael@capitaldiary.com)

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# THE KING OF GREIGE

Designer Brian Gluckstein gives rich Canadians the safe, neutral look he knows they want—'stylish but not too stylish' BY ANNE KINGSTON

## design

The Four Seasons Hotel's new Private Residences presentation centre in downtown Toronto is not only the sales office for the yet-to-be-built \$500-million development. The 4,500-sq.-foot space sponsored by Toronto interior designer Brian Gluckstein has become a new ground zero for design press voyeurs craving a glimpse of how the rich live, or rather, how developer Alan Markovitz hopes reimagining most of the concrete will want to live as they call it "the pinnacle of buildings in the super luxury market." Prices range from \$1.6 million to \$19 million for the 35th-storey penthouse, the highest ask ever for a condo in this country. The 9,018-sq.-foot space came on the market in late September. So far, no offers.

With current market rates, you'll find the lavish townhomes would be a mammoth sum, yet it's busy. But many touring there aren't looking to buy, says sales rep Lisa Storchfeld. They're here to check out Gluckstein's talent, which has been tapped to his tasteful taste. The entry lifts off the lobby of Park's George V Hotel. The stretch living room, with a marble fireplace on an upholstered leather wall, also encloses the shell of a luxury hotel. The dining room could host a NATO meeting. The big creamy bathroom is appropriately opulent, the stainless steel and marble kitchen, featured in this month's Canadian House & Home, divinely elegant.

This isn't a model suite, per se, Storchfeld says. Gluckstein has done high-end projects in Toronto, New York, L.A., Miami and Aspen

explains. Rather, "it's a showcase of the Four Seasons lifestyle." Markovitz echoes the sentiment: "These are houses that people can agree to." Agreed upon is a word that rings up often in conversation with Gluckstein, Canada's most popular interior designer. His home has neutral rooms (which can feature as much beige and soft grey they're "grunge") have made him a household hero in a country that champions the unobjectionable. Through Gluckstein Design Build, the firm he founded in 1986, which now employs 30, Gluckstein works primarily in high end real estate. But the 48-year-old's profile and status as a design magazine darling has made him the go-to guy for anyone with a prestige property market. Last year, Toronto's Hazelton Hotel based here to be Canada's most expensive hotel suite, its \$250-a-night Suite 300—all rooms over 4,200 sq. feet.

Gluckstein is accessible to the less privileged via his weekly appearances on City's CityLine, where he has been doling out advice since 1994. "I have tried to show the average person what real interior design is all about," he says. "Brian really relates to the audience," says former host Marilyn Denis. And the designer relates to viewers that replicate the generic luxury associated with fancy hotels and upscale condo showrooms, photos not spaces at their best, sustained by human habitation. Entrances are grand, wood paneling is ubiquitous. His colour palette—creams, beiges, taupe and greys—is more neutral than Switzerland. Gluckstein's focus on classic and modernist styles to the

tradition of decor legends Billy Hirschman and Albert Hadley, though he credits Christian Lacroix and John Saldaña as inspirations.

Gluckstein knows what rich people want, which apparently includes spa-library bathrooms, glass-etch fireplaces and plasma TVs. He built one in his Forest Hill house, which was showcased in *Canadian House & Home* in 2002. Gluckstein is tough on it questions about water damaging the beauty. "I'm not that aware in the tub," he says, looking at a TV to TV teacher persona. "You can't do it in a small space. And you have to have good ventilation. Besides, you will with a serious level of humidity. I wouldn't put a steam room in, though. That would be a problem."

Gluckstein's neutral, tailored, masculine look is also available to the masses through his furniture and housewares line sold at the Hudson's Bay Company. Gluckstein's home, located in 2004 with the slogan "Designer Brian Gluckstein: Now it's your turn," has expanded into baby furniture, Christmas ornaments and a "Condo" line.

"Brian has defined high end for the general public," says Toronto interior designer Linda Bertram, who hired him in 1986, the year he received a lifetime of applied arts master's degree from Ryerson. She promoted him from a junior designer to a project manager before he took on as his own 10th anniversary, she recalls. "He knew from the beginning what kind of success he wanted and it's exactly what he has."

Gluckstein is a brand, says Linda Bertram, the publisher of *Canadian House & Home*,



## design

who's bigger? "Brian's a senior designer people like him because they like his work, but also because they want his name on their plate. They want to show it off. Not in a negative way. They're proud of it."

Gluckstein has been criticized for rooms that are overly too mixed and warring. Brian has found his look and has stuck with it, she says. "He doesn't blow with the wind." No one thing has kept him worried about the shock of the new. "If you've been watching the design scene you'll say 'This was this before,'" she says. "It's not a designer's designer. It's a designer for real people who are not looking for trends or fads or to be on the edge of the wedge."

What these real people want, she says, is to be comforted by the familiar, not challenged. "When people are at their way up especially there's a certain insecurity missing out to a place that is not provocative. It's like you're not used to. People want to be expensive because they can afford it, they want to have luxury and high ceilings and bella and whistles, but they also want it to be safe. It doesn't mean it's a bad way. It's not off the wall, too avant garde, wacky." A designer's job is another way. "Brian has been able to bring style to very tall people. He's very Canadian. He's very hot, but not too explicit. He makes things special, but not too special."

Even those who find his work annoying and impersonal credit his ability. "He does what he does really well," says Toronto designer Jeremy Lindley, who views large-scale, more serious home forms as the 50/50 of architecture. "Gluckstein's downtown look makes him 'hard and hard,'" she says, though it has broad appeal. "For a lot of people it doesn't matter how personal it is. It just matters that it's big and fancy," she says. "And that's the reference to Palladian architecture and bells and whistles. It has worked for what? Few consumers? And he's still working."

Gluckstein's success stems to the fact designers need be more than creative. "It's the style business. Like any business, it's not

## HE'S A DESIGNER FOR REAL PEOPLE NOT LOOKING TO BE ON THE EDGE OF THE WEDGE

just one-fifth of the equation," says an industry insider. "It's talent, self-promotion and business sense—and Brian has it all." Gluckstein is a traffic promoter, says Reeves. "He takes the time when he finishes a job to document it and present it to us. He's very organized." All of his contracts stipulate the right to photograph a project for his portfolio, says Gluckstein, though not all clients permit the work to be shown in magazines.

Gluckstein is discreet when asked about million-dollar turnarounds. "There's not a number that's definitely a sale," he says. "It has to be substantial, only because it's going to be costly. It's not where I say it has to be around \$1 million or bigger, we've done agreements on New York that are 2,500 sq ft." Whatever the fee, it has allowed him to collect the work of Canadian painter David Black and to stage a week's worth during the winter to his Palm Beach house. "That's my thing," he says.

It's ultra-conservative financially, he says, to the point he can find more about property resale value than his clients. "We had clients who wanted a 10,000-sq-ft house with two bedrooms. I'll say 'I don't think that's a good idea, put in five bedrooms. Use that for clients.'"

Such a low support with clients that he often designs multiple homes for them. Some

are willing to hand him the keys and have him call when he's finished, he says. "I say, 'No, no, no, I want you involved. I want you to see things and touch things.'" Currently he's working on houses in Greenwich, Conn., for the daughter of a former client. "It makes me feel really old," he jokes, noting he'll likely do her house in the 1980s.

Gluckstein's nice-guy charm has served him well in an industry that can be socially Richard III, though, there's a steady core, says a man who knows him. "He's as tough as maul, because if you think his clients are all nice to work with, forget it."

"Some of my colleagues think we're coming across," he says. "But we're not. We're only supplying notes and things." He, in Gluckstein's case, supplying notes to an AIDS job at Toronto's hospital for Sick Children, a job he did for free and zero fanfare. (Some fellow designers were concerned when he went on television, long before HGTV. "But I said, 'I love design and want to share that.' Now these same people want to be on TV.")

A \$100,000 house can have the same sensibility as a two-million-dollar one, he says. "They can pick a color scheme or scheme, they can have the same wood colours." The fact that his look is now available everywhere from Pottery Barn to the Bay doesn't threaten his bespoke business, he says. "When you're designing for an individual you're custom-designing pieces. You're using different level of material and craftsmanship that is quite unique and I think the private client is at the very high end makes that."

It's usually the current and cost-conscious, which he dismisses as "cycle." The big picture will be around houses is not going to change," he says. Plans for a book are in the works. The Gluckstein Impressionist has added the Four Seasons project, 75 per cent of which has been sold. Despite the portfolio, however, will be a challenge. Anyone with a taste of a completely done won't see the accessible, says Reeves. "If you have a tradition to spend on your empty estate residence or pool or terrace in Toronto, one would think one would not want some designer from another country to do something as one has seen here, something more adventuresome." Then also remembers "But if you're an investor from Asia, India, China or Korea you might think this is a fabulous, that is one of Canada's top designers, this is me."



## BAD TASTE: BANKSY'S ANIMAL ART

In a New York City gallery show, the British graffiti artist manipulates common animal-related images in grisly and witty ways. A pair of Chihuahuas, one curled on chicken feet, peeks at a pair of rippling muscles; others writhe and twist in their skins and a lapsed leucism on a tree turns out to be a coat with blood-red lining. In the show, *The Village Pet Store* and *Charcoal Grill*, examines the contradictions in how humans relate to animals.

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ROGERS



BUOLIN nails the President's vocal tics and body language. Like *The Fey* doing Sarah Palin, he seems more authentic than his subject.

## Faking it even better than George W.

**Oliver Stone's biopic feels slapdash. Josh Brolin's performance, though, is anything but.**

**BY BRIAN D. JOHNSON** • Making a Hollywood movie about an American president before he has even finished his term is without precedent, and risky. Legends are supposed to take time to get. But then George W. Bush is no ordinary President. As he prepares to vacate the White House, leaving America's economy in ruins, an empire shattered, and his reputation in disgrace, he already looks like it's little boy who wonders why all his friends have left the playground. And that, essentially, is Oliver Stone's summation of Bush as W.—an earnest biopic that tries to explore how an affable loser bluffed his way into the world's most powerful job without any real qualifications.

Whether or not Stone is fully qualified to tell the story, he has shown a certain sympathy for the cause. After *JFK* and *Moon*, *W.* looks like the third chapter of an ad hoc trilogy about White House bad boys. But unlike the other films, *W.* is not a typical Stone melodrama threaded with conspiracy theories (The Bush administration conspired enough of its own fictions that there's no need to make stuff up.) And George W.—played with charismatic charm by Josh Brolin (*No Country for Old Men*)—is hardly sinister: Stone paints a surprisingly sunny and empathetic portrait of Bush, as a man who is never evil, only confused—a good natured nut who got in over his head and was always more passionate about baseball than politics.

Stone has a natural-born affinity for the character. Like Bush, he was a child of privilege with an overbearing father, lacrosse at Yale, and struggled with cocaine and alcohol. And as *W.* shows, Stone can be as blunt and bombastic as his subject.

*W.* toggles between two time frames. The

movie begins with Bush and his cabinet preparing the 2001 revision of Iraq (the Bushes take us through his days as a drunken frat boy at Yale, his decision to skip the bottle for born-again Christianity at 40, and his political breakthrough. Scripted by Stanley Weiser (*Wild Strawberries*), a conventionally solid narrative spells out how Bush's ambition was forged in the frustration of being unappreciated by his father. "Partying, chasing tail, drinking drunk—what are you, a Kennedy?" George Bush Sr. [James Connors]) fumes. Even after Dubya has reformed, George Jr. remains skeptical. Backed by a stinky barbershop quartet (George J. becomes a close aide to his father, the Texas governor while his younger brother, Jeb, has his eye on Florida. Jeb, they believe, is the smart one, and the dynasty should not "see Bush as a name").

Stone's coverage of political events is accurate. He doesn't bother to dramatize the 1000 election or Bush's handling of 9/11. As he dwells on the Iraq debacle—Bush being led wrong by advisers, stumbling over mispropaganda, and rushing to padgett with Jack-like zeal—the narrative has a slapdash quality, perhaps because it was rushed to the screen in time for the election. I never thought I'd complain about an Oliver Stone movie being too short, but *W.*, which under two hours, feels incomplete.

In pleasure he is in the gallery of performers, which are uneven. Broken is a delight. He nails Bush's vocal tics and body language. Taking a cue from Tony Soprano, he's always eating, as if food (politicians love long ball games that can only be ended by constant snacking). As the devoted Laura Bush, Elizabeth Berkley is utterly engaging. And Richard Dreyfuss injects Dick Cheney with eerie force. But among the collection of Bush advisers, a number of fine actors fall into lame caricature—including Thandie Newton (Condoleezza Rice), Jeffrey Wright (Colin Powell), and Sean Gleason (Donald Rumsfeld). When you marry liberal impressionism with clarity, capacious dialogue, things get provocative fast.

Which is why Brolin's performance is so remarkable. We're going to see nothing more important than politics with such dead-on accuracy that after a while they become more convincing than the real thing. After *The Fey* gave us the definitive Sarah Palin on *Saturday Night Live*, when Palin performed in the vice-presidential debate, she seemed like an inauthentic festschmel of herself. But Bush Palin wasn't as good as Fey's. Brolin's Bush is like that. He's more three-dimensional than the man he's portraying. And why not? Politics is acting, and Brolin is the better actor.

But the movie, like its subject, is confused. *W.* won't fully commit to either. Unsure if it's tragedy or farce, it compresses the two into a flattened docudrama—an instant replay of history with the game still in progress. **M**



### WE'RE TALKING... JENNIFER LOPEZ

It's tough to be a star, and it's tougher when you also too much. During an interview for *Life* magazine, Lopez let slip that after she gave birth to twins she succumbed to depression, feeling over what her children would ever really know of her being star. Apparently, Lopez changed her heart and tried to reveal the contents. The magazine agreed, but one online publication caught wind of what she said and published it. *Life*'s thinking of suing.

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## Normand Laprise's seal of approval

**Probably no other chef-proprietor in Canada has worked as hard cultivating local suppliers**

**BY JACOB TSCHULE** Many a accomplished chef would admit to being derailed at the prospect of following Thomas Keller on the mid-west, but not so Normand Laprise of Restaurant Togo in Montreal. At any rate, back on Sept. 2, when he returned to his hometown to chase out the Quebec Gourmande festival, just a week after the six Michelin starred owner-chef of the French Laundry and Per Se had passed through to show off some of his passion for his penultimate event, Laprise was looking very much his normal, relaxed self. In fact, when less than five hours before the start of the scheduled dinner I dropped by the busy restaurant, inside in Quebec City, to see how things were coming along in the kitchen, Laprise was not even done.

"Interviews," explained his business partner Christine Laroche, who has looked after the front of the house at Togo since his opening night back in 1995.

Of course, most of the prep work had been completed at home base in Montreal. But there was still much work to be done. At the back of the restaurant kitchen, Laprise's proprietor-chef Ivan Lefrançois was working with two of his staff on samples featuring some ripe red tomatoes roofed in a larger than green pesto. At another counter on another flank, two members of the so-called Togo brigade were poking over tops, well Quebec black ones, checking for quality and size, while alongside another was inspecting some grapes. Others were polished around the stove at the corner of the kitchen, tasting samples, checking their mise en place. And directing it all from the pass was Laprise's Togo chef de cuisine Charles Antoine Crête, late eye on the purposeful composure unfolding around him, and another on the tray of fresh asparagus.

sitting in front of them—some six types in all, harvested the day before from the St. Lawrence estuary at Rimouski, where Laprise spent a good portion of his youth on a farm.

"We dry it and then use it in the water," Crête explained, and then, holding up a particularly broad and ruddy leaf, added, "This one—this one is the best." "Korbu" being the Japanese name for what Laprise has called their ubiquitous dark leaf.

It was nearly five o'clock when Laprise finally relaxed and he looked relaxed and well, in some sporadic and black leather jacket contributing something to his personally happy look.

"I'm not eating a pear now," Laprise said to Crête, smiling—and he should have kept quiet, for the warning came from the opportunity to get the glowing thing over his wary chef's neck. The glowing thing was embraced with the life-sized image of a man never to match up with the fellow beach, and the image involved asked not—where you might expect to find something else—a length of sausage links.

No takes.

Good thing, too, in only an hour and a half, some 70 dishes who had each dropped \$400 for the privilege of an eight course Laprise extravaganza were to start trickling through the four-star—hungry, chatty and demanding. It was clearly time to get down to more serious business.

When a red chef is getting set to prepare multi-course banquets—or for that matter even a single dish—off-site, the business comes with complications. Printing a distinctive menu is not enough. A prototype edition of each dish listed there must also be turned out on a trial run to ensure that the kitchen is completely in tune with what is required to make 70 identical editions in a steady flow that will last no more than an hour or seven minutes from first plate to last. And the wait staff, charged with delivering those plates to the dining room

within that same time frame, must also have advance knowledge of what they are delivering—from the names of the ingredients to a fair way of knowledge of the timing behind their assemblage—less a customer should ask.

So at this point, Crête turned toward his chef ("Assume one minute at least" was his call to action). He then ordered the first plate personally—it was the *coronary* garnish, a spoonful of the already colored flower petals, fully seasoned, tossed and dressed with a shot glass of diluted puree juice (this was sound about, but it tastes like a

mouthful of summer). Laprise took it out to the dining room to show it to the kitchen waiters poised to serve his food for the first time and explained to his team.

And so it went—not in order, but in happy progress through the menu determined by a concourse dictated by mise en place and preparation time. Two fifty per cent red-top were shaved and dressed and returned to their shell, sprinkled with olive oil, dressed in a piece of cornstarch and bell



**IT TASTES LIKE SMOKED SALMON BUT IT'S PAKE SMOKED SALMON. IT'S A JOKE!**

JACOB TSCHULE FOR ENR



**SOCUS-CHEF** Charles-Antoine Crête (middle), Toqué's dishes: scallops with caviar (left), lobster from Îles de la Madeleine for lobster rolls.

peppers, and topped with a foam one from the lightly butter-dried and powdered blossoms of a saucer tree. A thick slice of fat was scooped from long-time Laprise supplier Fromagerie Héliey (Palmer, in Carignan, outside Montreal) is mixed and served in a pool of clear pear water studded with ground cherries, called honey-pile and baby-savage. Cœur-fleur of Angus beef is served with roast garlic, chamomile, elderberries and horradia. Sea urchins, which only the day before had been smoldering their own business in the St. Lawrence off Ramonnikia, had been rendered into cream and then returned to their formerly crisp spring shells. A cheese called Mennard from Saint-Rémi de Tinguid was sliced as thin as a sheet of paper and draped over a piece of fresh Quebec bismarck dressed with argan oil. For dessert, a small Mason jar was filled with a layered array of Lac Saint-Jean blueberries, white chocolate mousse, vanilla scoop and blackberry sorbet.

And while this particular dish mostly resembles Laprise's sensibilities, preoccupations with varied and contrasting textures, vibrant flavors, and a determined lack of pretension, there was one last course that came and—stayed on the menu at zero Na 2—this personalized his style and complexity. Take one quarter-inch slice of filets of salmon, baked, rendered firm and dense from its cure, and sandwich it with thick-smoked cream between two perfectly flat potato chips (don't be thin as to be translucent). "It tastes like smoked salmon but it's not smoked salmon," Crête explained. "It's like smoked salmon. It's a joke."

Laprise has always cooked with a sense of fun. The first time I remember eating at Toqué was a terrace of salmon and avocado shaped like a heart with a pair of ocean shoes sitting up like antennae from its head. There was back in 1993, three years later food critic Alan Richman wrote in GQ of awarding similar plating in front of him: "I asked our good-ass waitress if he wouldn't mind waiting

the most punched on my radishes—the impact was a sweet potato-chip beauty with garlic-dressed armoire. I was soon subdued by my machinery." Laprise, he concluded at meal's end, "is the most of all chefs, an aggressively out-of-control improviser with absolute command over his food and his impulses."

The command was issued in the expected long and dutiful morning that began with two years of culinary school in Charlevoix, Que., followed by work and internships in all the expected, long-established restaurants of Quebec City (Café de la Paix, Marie Clarine, etc.). His progress was marked by years abroad in France, where he served a series of apprenticeships that began in Lyon (Bistrorie le Nord), and took him through Wiesbaden (an Alsatian), Rome, and finally Dijon (Hôtel de la Gloire). The French experience familiarized him with superior artisan-sourced ingredients, and it was that, as much as the techniques he acquired there, that brought his particular culinary vision forward, again finally arrived in Montreal to serve an executive sous-chef at Le Lac des Îles de la Madeleine, and then followed that with his first gig as executive chef in Canada, he was struck above all else by the poor quality of the ingredients at hand as what was supposedly a destination dining city.

This corner stove has in large part been defined by attempts to change that. There is probably no other chef proprietor in the country who was worried quite so hard with so many local suppliers as has Laprise. Most of the best Quebec products started out as Laprise suppliers. He popularized just a few local items:

Like Verre in the St. Lawrence, where conditions on the salt marsh replicate those of his rambling and Brandy (salt), he made it too popular—and what with the limited supply, the very bulk of lamb seen bearing that label is no such thing. It was Laprise who challenged the farmers at St. Charles pork to come up with a cream-fed crossbred saddle pig (you will find it now on the menu of Dural Road and Thomas Keller). The vegetables and baby greens of Pierre André Duguesne acquired such a reputation through Toqué that they soon showed up a five-hour flight away on Rob Feen's menu at L'Amore. And Laprise was responsible too for promoting a venison, now ubiquitous in Quebec, called le cerf de Bédard (when the brother Denis Fournier first brought him a sample it was hard as shoe leather—Laprise had to teach him how to hang and age it). Nowadays the only commercial restaurant supplier that delivers to Toqué is delivering water. Everything else comes directly from a farmer, forager or fisherman. The list is long—and being as it is seen province-wide as a seal of approval.

"Everyone is always knocking on my door about something," Laprise admitted to me over a late-afternoon coffee at Toqué. "I'm not going to change my top five suppliers after 11 years. But you know, you want to be able, you take a sample. That's how you stay on top of it. I just delivered to Normand Laprise at Toqué." ■

Josh Kessler's book, *My Canada Includes Fox Goss*, will be published by Douglas & McIntyre in the fall of 2009.

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BUTLER: Churchill surveys damage to the House of Commons, at times, he was as dedicated to payback as Harris, at others he was more

## 'Are we beasts?' asked Churchill

**Bomber Harris and the complicated question of how the Allies won the Second World War**

**BY BRIAN KETTER** • On Dec. 29, 1941, one of the worst nights of the Blitz, Arthur Harris was among the dark-bound officers on the Air Ministry who climbed to the roof to see London burn. As they watched the dome of St. Paul's stand somewhat immune to the Luftwaffe's stream of incendiary bombs, Harris quietly mused, "They are sowing the seed." From that time he took over the RAF's Bomber Command in February 1942, Bomber Harris became the driving force behind a bombing campaign that ensured Germany would stay the while until, by the time the Second World War ended in Europe, in May 1945, some 50 cities had been obliterated and 750,000 people had been killed on the ground by it. Dead too were 80,000 young men, more than 10,000 of them Canadian. And though it all, until late in the war, German war production kept rising.

Unsure over the (dis)order of the deaths and the slight refusal often portrayed as an attempt to insert today's higher sensibilities into yesterday's life-and-death struggle. Not so. At University of Toronto historian Randall Hansen remarks with passionately argued but even-handed book, *Fire and Fury* (Doubleday), doubt—moral and military—about the campaign date back to the war itself. Winston Churchill was a strong but erratic supporter of Harris. Most times the prime minister was as dedicated to payback as the air marshal, at others Churchill was not so certain. In 1943 he wrote while warning him of domestic backlash: "Are we beasts?" he asked South African prime minister Jan Smuts. "Are we taking this too far?"

Given the size of the Canadian contribution and the pain we paid—almost a quarter of our war dead—it's hardly surprising that

the controversy has burned hot here. And still does. It was only a year ago that outraged veterans forced the Canadian War Museum to remove a plaque that juxtaposed the campaign with the small reduction in German war production. To the veterans it seemed to suggest the basis for the suffering they both endured and underwent, turning their lost comrades into war criminals or, perhaps worse, victims of a useless strategy.

Hansen agrees to clearly separate the issues involved. Was the bombing justified, and did it work, are distinct questions, and neither reflect on the honor or valor of the young men—boys, really—who earned it out. In the early years, when British steel alone and precision bombing now and then slightly panicked the abuse for the war effort was not bombing—burning down—or bombing at all. That asked Harris, who wanted to raise the Germans' pay and believed that killing them in massive numbers would win the war. He wanted the government to tell the public, in his own words, that "the destruction of houses and lives are the intended aims. They are not by-products of attempts to hit factories."

Harris's theory was put to the test in Blitz began on July 27, 1941, when 600 bombs were dropped on a working-class district, destroying only five square kilometers. A local radio talker of the, peaking at over 1,800°C, cooked

the eggs from the ovens where covering thousands were asphyxiated. Those fleeing outside were often caught by falling sparks, their feet sunk and their clothes caught fire, incinerating them. If they jumped in the canals, they were cooked to death—the water was boiling. At 10:15 a.m., Hansen notes, the city's senior air raid warden "joined down a novel word in his logbook, *fourteen*." *Fourteen*

Surprisingly, Hansen argues that even Hamburg levels of death and destruction—40,000 buildings destroyed, 42,000 dead—could be justified if any bombing had done what proponents claimed it would—shorten the war. But it didn't. The production less after the most devastating raid of the war was one per cent of one month's output.

What did work to bring Nazi Germany to its knees was intense precision bombing carried out on war-making targets, mostly by the work of the U.S. Air Force. The Americans thought their approach better, both morally—they were responsible for a quarter of civilian deaths, the RAF for 75 per cent—and reliably. There were more than 100,000 British production cars, Albert Speer, told postwar interrogators that the U.S. had struck such blows by day several times that British follow-up by night might have brought total collapse. But Harris, who begrudged every plane diverted from city obliteration, did not send his men to those targets. Hansen's conclusion? (Spoiler) Germany did not end the war—it prolonged it. ■



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**FINALLY, A BOOK ABOUT... AMERICAN ABSTINENCE**  
Jessica Warner's *The Gay George Bush Stopgap Drinking* (McClelland & Stewart) is a true sexual history, not of the President's youthful indiscretions, but of abstinence as a political religious force in the U.S. Since the just-say-no days of prohibition, the morality has and softens, it now belongs to the religious right, which focuses it as the solution to social problems ranging from drug abuse and teen pregnancy to AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.







ROASTED: Hamilton is happy to be known for his perpetual glow, although, he says, it's not really something you want as an epitaph

## Tales from the man with the tan

**Romancing Liz Taylor, skinny-dipping with JFK: George Hamilton doesn't mind if he does**

**BY LIAMNE GEORGE** • The draw of most celebrity romances is the suds-bosom period: the dramatic point just after the commercial break when talent and fortune are squandered with a froth of pills and the ring from a bottle. But in George Hamilton's new memoir, aptly named *Don't Mind If I Do*, the dark days never come. It's as though *Kohonen* never stops playing in the background. Easy and breezy, his life reads like one big, coast-guarded Palm Beach cocktail party.

And so you might wonder, what's the payoff of a memoir with no hard-earned lessons? The point is that George Hamilton—the man with the perpetual tan—is a philosopher of sorts. You may not know it to look at him on the cover of his auto, dinner jacket, and *Clash* record (three pins being here), but his lessons are there for the taking. “I had three problems, as you know,” he told *Rolling Stone*. “But it was always at the way I looked at them. That’s my interpretation of people: to take the difficult and make it simple.” By his own definition, Hamilton is a guru.

In his early days, the 60-year-old actor, who has been in the acting game for more than half a century, seemed alongside the biggest movie stars of his generation: Robert Redford, Warren Beatty, Kirk Douglas. He always played the same guy—the preppy outsider in love—and he made a good living from it, until the '60s revealed his type (terrifically uncool). But here's his first lesson: don't take it personally. “You have a job and your man comes to an end, just like any gambling game,” he says. “You make a decision: You either get back in the game, quit the game altogether, or change your way of playing—and that's what I did. I changed my game. What's that did to me?” (If you get into it, you make money.)

and find a girl who's got a heart of gold.” In the '60s, Hamilton was savvy enough to get on the job. He starred in the 1960 *Run, Run, Run*, the *Gay Blade*, shot a few *Dynasty* episodes, and moved into made-for-TV film. *The Cool* for Christmas (2004). Most notably, he appeared in season two of ABC's *Dancing With the Stars*. He lacked youthful grace and mobility, but he won over the audience with persistence. He doesn't care that he's never won an Oscar. Fame, for Hamilton, means never having to wait for a decent table. “It's a practical thing, that's it.”

You could say that Hollywood merely served as a front to facilitate Hamilton's ostensible real life, in which he ranked among the most privileged of actors, competing for women with Warren Beatty and Bob Fosse. (On Liz Taylor “She knows how to be a woman and you never forget a woman like that.” On Marilyn Monroe “There she was, this beautiful, outrageous woman, talking about things that were far deeper than I.”) He dated president Lyndon B. Johnson's daughter Lynda, and was forced to call in a white supremacist to expose his brother's homosexual ally. He took a date for a naked romp in the ocean off Palm Beach (see right) and a full moon and ran into another pair of skinny-dippers—three-screener Jack Kennedy and a woman who was not his lovely wife.

The son of a lawyer in Maryland's blood, his mother, an eccentric, beautiful, southern divorcée, made husband-hunting a cross-country adventure for the whole family. She died Ronald Reagan and Howard Hughes, and married as often as it was convenient. “Her spirit was just so outrageously young that it was infectious.” Things that might have landed other people in therapy for years have a way of rolling off his back. At 33, at 35, Hamilton was “deflowered” by his father's much younger second wife, a singer. (He says it had a “Mrs. Robinson” feeling. “I didn't find that it earned me or changed me.”)

Hamilton tried marriage a couple of times (but not two sons), but it never lasted. “It was hard for me because I have this wanderlust,” he says. “I always believe around the corner, something really good is going to happen.”

Then there's the sun. More than any signature—the thing that's landed him on *Mad Men*’s “Pilot” (the show he's been on since 1960)—it's a metaphor for his approach to life. He is usually quite polite by nature. But on a recent call on spring break one summer, he got a dark tan, went to a party, and suddenly, the minute was swarming. “I thought, wait a minute, here I just found Ford at Lido's. I mean, I mean, I mean, I mean.” So he worked at it. “I even found a girlfriend in school who did my hair for me four days a week, and I went to school for three and spent most of my time on the beach. I have all my life.” ■



DAY IS THE SUN

### RECORD SNAKE-SITTING

Hamilton's “Pilot” took South America broke the record for being contained in a room with 40 snakes. 113 days. But he was bitten once, on the shoe by a puff adder, but he believes the greater unpleasantness came from other sources. “The first time you can't ignore it and the end of a thing and he'll say your own spirit is something I really missed,” he says. That, and putting up with three games who made off with \$5,500 raised for charity by the start.



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## Got Post-Election Defeat Disorder? I can help.



**BOB D'AMICO**

So you ran to become a member of Parliament – and lost. You will not be taking a seat in the House of Commons. You will not be managing an office in the Hill. You will not be receiving a long, soothing kiss of welcome from Mike Duffy (given to Conservative MPs only, and Peter MacKay twice).

No way to sugar-coat it—this is a tough time for you. On election night you had to choose your rival to vote against defeat. You called him a noble Canadian of great means, you loved his phone, and you called him an obnoxious anti-fur man whose wife you're lucky you did it in that order.

The crushing days have made one thing clear: the transition back to real life will not be easy. A week ago, getting up to go to work and standing in a supermarket parking lot determined to interact with your fellow citizens made you the veritable embodiment of the democratic spirit. Now it makes you a ragdoll.

Because you are vulnerable, some will attempt to comfort you. These people will tell you that you waged a valiant campaign. These people will tell you that you did yourself proud. These people are liars. Also, they probably voted for your opponent. And even if they didn't, you will secretly harbor the suspicion that they did. Come to think of it (not that you're better), you can recall at least three neighbours who didn't even ask how you were going to support your campaign.

They (misadvised) the size of being alone a big bottle of water when you drag by at 4 a.m. it wouldn't be fair to elaborate on just one of them.

If you're experiencing feelings of acute depression and aren't hating everyone alive, you may be suffering from Post-Election Defeat Disorder. How can you tell for sure? The condition is easy to diagnose using this simple questionnaire:

1. Those three houses—did you actually go on there?
2. Were you unable to read Question No. 1 because you are weeping?
3. Are you answering this questionnaire in bed?
4. Have you been lying in this bed since Tuesday night?
5. Is this "bed" actually the linoleum floor of your campaign HQ?

If your answer to these questions is yes, then please get up—if not for yourself, then for the workman who's been having to mop around you as they turn your headquarters into a Starbucks.

Understand something: from an image standpoint, it's important to counter your

all over the neighbourhood can be a real ego boost. But it's a shame to drive around and discover that all your campaign signs have been taken down. To atone off the damage of reality, write your name on the back of your hand. Hold up your hand as you drive. This trick will also insulate the process of identification when the police find you passed out behind the liquor store dumpster.

**Depression:** You're alone now. So alone your family is afraid of sending you. Your campaign manager and advisors have officially complicated their duties by a) duly signing the required paperwork, and b) butting into you as off-the-second-investigation with local reporters. There are no signs that it's over like your neighbour who is looking at you funny



## Are you experiencing feelings of acute depression and hating-everyone-alive-ness?

very public failure with a high-profile story in the local media in which a third success of yours is outlined. (Hitting all three houses with your vote, while technically a success, is not exactly what we're looking for here.)

But from a personal standpoint, it's more important to understand what's ahead—and the difficult emotions you're going to need to work through. To help you transition, here are the five stages of post-election defeat grief and how they typically manifest themselves.

**Denial:** While it is undeniably true that most married women include a pledge to remain loyal ("for better or for worse," it being a little far to insist that your spouse wear a black robe to breakfast and answer only to the wife "Ms. Speaker").

**Anger:** Just because Don Newman announced your defeat on national television, it is not technically his fault.  
**Rage:** Have your name placed

when you go on the bus. This is probably because of your obvious lack of self-control and/or pants.

**Acceptance:** Acceptance typically occurs in two phases—

**Phase 1:** People are stupid, elections are stupid, democracy is stupid, the Greeks who invented democracy are stupid, all Greeks are stupid, insurrection is stupid, the movie *Animal House* is stupid, all movies are stupid, everything is stupid, I'm stupid, I'm stupid for ever doing this. I'm stupid for putting myself out there, I'm never doing this again, never, not ever, never again will I subject myself to this kind of—

**Phase 2:** What's that? There's a provincial election coming?

"We'll skip it to make sure this damn race is!"

**ON THE WEB:** To read Post-Election on the Internet, visit this blog: [www.macleans.ca/youth](http://www.macleans.ca/youth)

## GILBERT SANDBERRY

1973-2006

## When he was six, his father drowned in Tadoule Lake, where they'd moved to reconnect to the land

Gilbert Sandberry was born in Churchill, Man., on Feb. 14, 1973, the second of five children to John and Theresa John, a Deer hunter. Soon after, along with the rest of their Sault Ste. Marie family, they moved to Tadoule Lake, a remote northern region 150 km south of Winnipeg. The boys, Richard, Gilbert and Levesau, were each born a year apart. In their delight, Thomas John would carry them around by his neck, their thin arms hanging on for all they were worth. Charlotte, the only girl, came later. Gilbert, a cheerful, dark-haired joker, most resembled Thomas John: same eyes, cheeks, and hair, says his uncle Joseph Yasse. The raccoons blurring together as he got older. "They were identical," says Nancy Powelhorst, Gilbert's cousin. "He liked hunting that, but, sometimes, I think it hurt."

When Gilbert was six, Thomas John drowned in Tadoule Lake while returning from a fall hunt. His daughter, the Sault Ste. Marie, who for 31 years had lived under horrific conditions in Churchill and had relocated to Tadoule Lake in an attempt to start fresh. The Churchill team—the result of a federal relocation in 1958 by the federal government from their former home—dismayed the band. According to an official who grewed these plans, few under stood where they were or why they were there. No one spoke English. When promised housing and building supplies to help them, the band settled in sheds at the edge of town. Few found work, and most returned to scavenging from the dump. By 1969, a third were dead, most by suicide or house fire. Distraught, a group of band leaders, including Gilbert's father, initiated a back-to-the-land movement. In 1971 Gilbert's grandfather, former chief Peter Yasse, found Tadoule Lake, the most northern and isolated community in Manitoba, and, two years later, the band began the move. Gilbert was born that winter.

It was a hopeful move, and Gilbert's parents, like many others, believed they could return to a lost way of life: hunting for moose and caribou, fishing in the glacial lake. But it came crashing to an end when Thomas John drowned. Pregnant with Charlotte, Sarah Lee, "She just couldn't live here anymore," says her brother Joseph. The house, it built on a high cedar bluff overlooking water. "She couldn't stand to see the lake," he explains. Her

mother, Ruthie Yasse, took in the boys, aged 5, 6 and 7.

Ruthie spoke no English, and taught Gilbert and his brothers to speak Dene—rare for kids their age. As a child, Gilbert began painting and drawing caribou and eagles, said to bring good luck. No one taught him. "He must've had it in him," says Nancy. In 1986, after graduating from Peter Yasse Memorial School, Gilbert moved to Winnipeg with his brothers, to attend high school. Like most kids from

Tadoule Lake, he bonded at parties in the city's north end. "Wednesday to my life," says Richard. "Gilbert, especially, liked it."

After high school, he moved back north, working construction and travelling all over Manitoba. "He hitchhiked to Winnipeg," says his brother Richard. "And he lived in South Indian Lake, Leaf Rapids and Thompson." There, he met Levesau Dumas, with whom he had two children, Precious and Miles, now 6 and 4, he'd carry them around his neck, the way his father would have.

Kind and gentle, Gilbert was "a guy in the background, not making noise type of guy," says Nancy. "His father was just like that. There's not too many people here. Churchill was rough. Let's just put it that way." His uncle Joseph says Gilbert lived "in his own world." He still painted—"his art is everywhere," says a band member—and he participated in hand games and drumming, like his father.

Recently, however, Gilbert had fallen on hard times, he was drinking, and he and Levesau had split up.

In mid-August, Gilbert moved back to Tadoule Lake from Leaf Rapids—for his kids' sake, says Joseph. He hoped to take them back with him, he says. He was happy to be home, says Richard. He and his cousin Albert Thonawase spent the last days of summer fishing off the rocky shore, near the school. On Aug. 15, they headed out to the open water in a small mid engine. A half-hour later, a strong wind blew up, kicking up waves across the wide, shallow lake. The next day, friends searching found a single shoe and a broken paddle on the lake shore. Two weeks later on Sept. 12, the day after Thonawase's remains were found, Gilbert's body was retrieved from the lake's south end, near the spot where, 19 years earlier, his father's body had been pulled from the cold, clear water. Each had come to Tadoule Lake to try to start over.

BY NANCY MACDONALD

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